June

# The Black Cat

1918

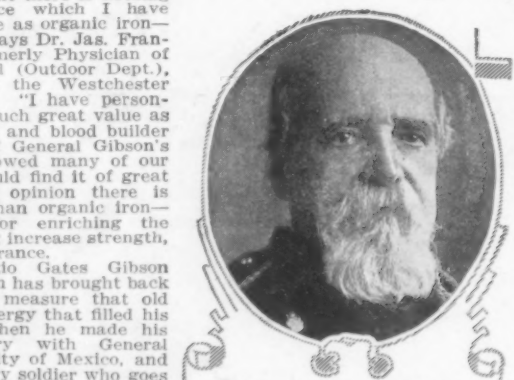
## Clever Short Stories

# Gen. Gibson Says he Feels Every Soldier Who goes to the Front Should Take Nuxated Iron

**Dr. James Francis Sullivan, formerly physician of Bellevue Hospital, (Outdoor Dept.) New York and the Westchester County Hospital, says every soldier and civilian who wants something to help increase his strength and endurance should have the prescription below filled and take Nuxated Iron three times daily as did Generals Gibson, Gordon and Clem and Judge Yoder.**

"What every soldier most needs is tremendous "stay there" strength, power and endurance, with nerves of steel and blood of iron. To help produce this result there is nothing in my experience which I have found so valuable as organic iron—Nuxated Iron," says Dr. Jas. Francis Sullivan, formerly Physician of Bellevue Hospital (Outdoor Dept.), New York, and the Westchester County Hospital. "I have personally found it of such great value as a tonic, strength and blood builder that I believe if General Gibson's advice were followed many of our fighting men would find it of great benefit. In my opinion there is nothing better than organic iron—Nuxated Iron—for enriching the blood and helping increase strength, energy and endurance.

General Horatio Gates Gibson says Nuxated Iron has brought back to him in good measure that old buoyancy and energy that filled his veins in 1847 when he made his triumphant entry with General Scott into the City of Mexico, and he feels that every soldier who goes to the front should take Nuxated Iron.

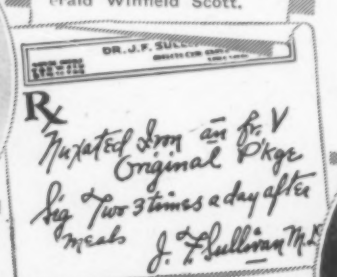


General Horatio Gates Gibson, U. S. A. (Retired, who entered the City of Mexico in the war of 1847 with General Winfield Scott.

General David Stuart Gordon, U. S. A. (Retired), promoted for gallant conduct in the battle of Gettysburg; well-known Indian fighter. General Gordon says: "Despite my own advanced age, Nuxated Iron has made me fit and ready for another campaign, and if my country needs me, I stand ready to go."

Another remarkable case is that of General David Stuart Gordon, noted Indian fighter and hero of the battle of Gettysburg. General Gordon says: "When I became badly run down this year, I found myself totally without the physical power to come back as I had done in my younger days. I tried different so-called 'tonics' without feeling any better, but finally I heard of how physicians were widely recommending organic iron to renew red blood and rebuild strength in worn-out bodies. As a result I started taking Nuxated Iron and within a month it had roused my weakened vital forces and made me feel strong again, giving me endurance such as I never hoped to again possess."

Another interesting case is that of General John Lincoln Clem, who at the early age of 12 years was Sergeant in the U. S. Army and the last veteran of the Civil War to remain on the U. S. Army active list. General Clem says: "I find in Nuxated Iron the one and ever-reliable tonic. Two months after beginning the treatment I am a well man."




The above is Dr. Sullivan's prescription for enriching the blood and helping to make strong, keen, red-blooded Americans—men and women who dare and do.

General John L. Clem, U. S. A. (Retired), the drummer boy of Shiloh who entered the U. S. Army as a drummer boy at the age of eleven years. He was promoted to be Sergeant for gallantry at the battle of Chicamauga when only 12 years old. He says that Nuxated Iron is the one and ever-reliable tonic—that he obtained most surprising results from its use in two weeks' time.

If people would only take Nuxated Iron when they feel weak or run-down instead of dosing themselves with habit-forming drugs, stimulants and alcoholic beverages, there are probably thousands who might readily build up their red blood corpuscles, increase their physical energy, and get themselves into a condition to ward off the millions of disease germs that are almost continually around us. It is surprising how many people suffer from iron deficiency and do not know it. If you are not strong or well you owe it to yourself to make the following tests: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of Nuxated Iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see how much you have gained.

Judge Samuel S. Yoder, Statesman, Jurist and for 18 years a practicing physician— formerly Surgeon Major in the Army and now Commander in Chief of the Union Veteran Union, says: "Nuxated Iron restores, revivifies and rehabilitates the system. To the man of 70 as I am it is just as certain, just as efficacious as to the youth in his teens."

MANUFACTURERS' NOTE: Nuxated Iron which is prescribed by Dr. Sullivan and which has been used by Generals Gibson, Gordon, Clem, Judge Yoder and others with such surprising results, is not a secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black nor upset the stomach. The manufacturers guarantee successful and entirely satisfactory results to every purchaser or they will refund your money. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

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# The Black Cat

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# THE BLACK CAT CLUB

THE twenty-five dollar prize for the best story in the March number was awarded to Nathan Clover, author of *The Promise.* Prizes for criticisms were awarded to the following persons, in the order named: Mrs. John R. Powell, St. Louis, Mo.; Miss Harriette Wilbur, Duluth, Minn.; Francis J. Gillooly, Philadelphia, Pa.; Mrs. Charles Cameron, Highland Park, Mich.; Arthur Powell, Stratford, Conn.; Miss Bessie Loesges, Riverside, Ill.; Pendleton P. Karr, Washington, D C.; Lowell C. Leslie, Delphos, Ohio; N. Henry Seaburg, Boston, Mass.

*The Promise* is remarkable both for its simplicity and finish and for its dramatic directness and intensity. In the first two paragraphs we are given an adequate revelation of the setting and principal characters. The first paragraph deserves close study for its attention to detail. It introduces the setting, the chief character, and all the objects which are to figure later. The rain that whitters against the panes later reveals the presence of the craven knee; the dry fur of the cat singing to the fire betrays afterward Granny's loyal but futile lie; the clock presently harbors the traitor; and the fowling piece on the wall brings about the peculiarly fitting end to the one who was loudest in prayer and too meek to fight! Granny's soliloquy in the second paragraph constitutes the "retrospect" of the story, preparing for Jonah's perfidy by the statement of his mixed origin, with the inference that the good that is in him is highly diluted with hypocrisy and cowardice. When the action begins, Granny is given no time for pondering; her conclusions are intuitive rather than the result of reasoning; so the author spends no time in describing her thoughts and feelings. Her words and actions alone reveal her change from Jonah's protector to his executioner. Sufficient reasons for her belief in his guilt are deftly marshalled before the reader, however; the evil nature of Jonah's father, Jonah's abrupt arrival, his craven pleas, his unsatisfactory explanation of his fear, though not enough in themselves, when coupled with the Squire's report of a spy, convince Granny that her promise must be kept to the uttermost. The conclusion satisfies not only the requirements of art but the emotional demand of the reader that Granny fulfill her promise; and so skilfully has every incident been handled that we have a complete dramatic unit in a few hundred words, while at the same time the characters are sufficiently suggestive to fit, if need be, into a dramatic story of much wider scope. It is a story that grows more interesting at second reading; in fact, its brevity is somewhat of a drawback at the first reading. There is too much standing out boldly to permit the attention to be held at any certain point. Each dramatic incident might have been rendered doubly so by interposing more narrative or description between it and the next dramatic incident. It might have gained in vividness if not so closely knit, though as it stands it may claim distinction for both substance and form.

*The Right Eye of Cardamon* unfolds a well planned and neatly laid plot, with a satire on criminals and criminal lawyers, that is in a way reminiscent of Dickens. Of course we are not expected to credit the power of the wonderful right optic any more than we are expected to believe that Grandfather Smallweed's granddaughter was always shaking him up into his chair. The author knows very well that the right eye is sadly out of drawing and that Cardamon's persistence and skill in anticipating the prosecuting attorney is what really wins his cases; else why does he make Cardamon shout and rant in the last court scene in an effort to lose his case? With its dark counter plot and its lack-of-character drawing, this story is something to chuckle over, especially the incidents of the burglars robbing Peter to pay Paul and, as a culminating stroke, robbing Paul the swell to pay Paul the criminal lawyer to defend them. Had Cardamon been a woman, his revenge would not have been complete until his clients knew why the case had been lost, just as the author tells us instead of leaving it for us to infer.

*Home* preaches the old, old story of a dog's fidelity to his master. Spot, we must concede, is a remarkable dog if we are to credit him with a homing instinct keen enough to enable him to find his way from Moonrise on Long Island, to Rivington Street, New York. The author's word pictures are excellent, notably that describing Spot as the elder statesman of a famous race. He gives us good bits of character delineation, as in Mrs. Abington's unerring instinct for the aristocratic qualities in the dog and her blindness to any interest in the mongrel Mickey. Rivington Street, too, is brought so vividly before our eyes that we can see it without half trying. But we are forced in one or two places to feel that the author is more accustomed to handling exposition than narration, as for instance, where he drops away from pure story telling into a treatise on the homing instincts of animals. And we should be compelled to follow Spot more rapidly without so much detail, when finally he sets out on his quest, and be dragged breathlessly after him (without

(*Continued on page* 44)

# THE LAW OF THE WOLF

By CHART PITT

*To a man from the hills prospecting for clams for his three meals a day, hard cash is a powerful temptation. And the price of a man at the den of Malay Pete, the Seattle crimp, is one hundred fifty dollars.*

THE shadows of night came down from the lonely hills and fluttered above the clam flats where Butterfly Tom had built his hut among the driftwood. It was the fag end of a lean winter, and the Puget Sound drizzle still fastened itself like a leech upon the land. The last traces of daylight filtered through the thick gray mush of clouds to westward, and was reflected upon little heaps of clam shells that littered the open space in front of the shack. Like the bleached bones of some pest camp they gleamed from the shadows—and in them lay the bitter tragedy of an old man's life.

The blue-green coals of a driftwood fire were still sputtering in the rain, when a claw-like hand pushed aside the canvas flap that covered the door of the hut, and Butterfly Tom staggered out into the night. A long, lean man with face and garments of gray, he made scarcely a blotch in the listless landscape of the clam flat. His drooping moustache covered the mouth of a dreamer; but there was something in his hungry, searching eyes that told only too plainly that his dreams never had come true. With unsteady steps he approached the fire and threw more fuel upon the coals—the copper-painted wreckage of some ship that, like himself, had been cast upon the beach to rot.

Behind him the arc lights of Seattle began to blink through the mist. Up there the cosy cars purred along the wet pavements, and the evening crowds were beginning to drift into the picture shows. There, also, were endless miles of lighted shop windows, filled with everything the human heart could crave—warm clothing, choice cigars, and *food*. Butterfly Tom shuddered at the thought, and his eyes of washed-out blue turned hopelessly toward the hut.

"Ho Clarence! What did you do with the clams you dug this afternoon?" the old man questioned in a throaty whisper.

Once more the canvas door of the hut was opened, and a young man slouched out and hovered over the fire. Like his sire he was long and lean, and his ragged garments were thrown into prominence by a flaming red handkerchief that was loosely knotted about his neck. For a moment he hung his head. Then he faced the old man across the sputtering flame.

"I didn't get any," he mumbled. "I'll starve before I'll dig another clam. It hurts my back."

Butterfly Tom turned his face toward the beach. The rising tide was already rippling across the clam flats. There was not a mouthful of food in the miserable camp. The loss of three meals was a serious thing to them in their half-famished condition. But they were helpless until the next afternoon's tide should uncover the bivalves upon which they fed.

"What we going to do about supper?"

The old man's voice was as gray and listless as his face. Like a river of oil it flowed along, with neither inflection nor emphasis to break up its unlovely monotony.

"I don't know," the boy whined as he fumbled the red handkerchief about his neck. "I'm going back to Idaho just as soon as I can earn the price. Fourteen dollars and eighty-six cents is a lot of money when you can't find a job."

"Can't find a job!" For the moment Butterfly Tom's voice trembled with a touch of emotion as he stared at the lazy

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boy across the camp-fire. "There's plenty of work for a strong boy like you. Why they're shanghaiing men for the whalers every day. I saw in the paper where Malay Pete, a fellow up on Seaboard Street, is getting a hundred and fifty dollars for every man he puts aboard the ships."

"Did you see that piece about the whale ships, too?" A shadow of fear flitted across the fuzzy face of Clarence Waterson. Then he brightened with a new thought. "Why don't you get a job yourself, if they want men so bad?"

"Yes, it's always poor old Butterfly that has to tote the load. No one seems to notice that he is getting to be an old man. What you you going to do when I die—put me in the potter's field?"

"I do' know," the long-legged youth grunted.

The silence grew strained—unbearable. The dripping rain hissed among the hot ashes, and the rising tide whispered sullenly through the beach boulders back of the hut.

"A Waterson never slept in the potter's field yet," Butterfly Tom whispered, as he stared into the blazing driftwood. Then he turned to the boy, and the light of battle flared up in his weak, old eyes. "If you put me there, I'll come back and haunt you—so help me God! There'll be a long, gray shadow creeping among the beach boulders every night you kindle your fire."

"I won't be here to see it." The boy spoke the first hopeful word he had uttered since his father's money gave out. "I told you I was going back to Idaho just as soon as I earned them fourteen dollars and eighty-six cents. The hill trails are hard and steep; and, thank God, a clam can't climb 'em."

The boy edged away into the shadows.

"Where you going?" Butterfly Tom questioned suspiciously.

"Going to get a job," Clarence mumbled as he slipped off into the night. "Got to get them fifteen bones to take me back to God's Country."

Butterfly Tom slumped down into the firеglow. His weak, old eyes were searching the flame like some pyromancer, trying to wring the secrets of the future from the red shiver of the burning driftwood. The rising tide lapped among the boulders of the clam flat, and the gloomy night tightened its clutches upon the supperless camp.

"He's after his fifteen bones," the wretched man groaned as he edged closer to the fire. "Then he'll go back to the lazy life of the hills, and leave me here to die on the beach—and I thought life was going to be easy for me after Clarence got to be a man."

The driftwood burned down to a heap of coals that threw a bloody blotch upon the even blackness of the night. Butterfly Tom sat like some deformed image in the fireglow.

"It's the wolf law. As long as you keep your feet you're a good wolf—but God help you if you ever get down," the old man whispered, with a shiver of fear in his voice.

His hungry heart went back across the miles, back to the wilderness he loved, where the famished packs hunted for food under the dead-white light of the winter moon.

With the simple faith of the outlands, Butterfly Tom had followed the game trails, believing that there was a spark of divine fire in every human breast, something that set him apart from the beasts of the field. That intangible quality was embodied in one word, *brotherhood*. Man alone knew how to stretch a helping hand to a fallen brother. That was the religion of the outlands, where the latchstring always hung on the outside of the door.

With this simple faith Tom Waterson had come to the city, bringing with him the savings of twenty hard years on the trap line. And the human wolves that slunk along the shadowy alleys of Seattle had feasted upon his innocence. When they had sucked him dry they showed him the path that led to the clam flat—and looked for another victim. When it was too late, Butterfly Tom realized that the law of the street was the same old wolf law of the wilderness—*God help the man who is down.*

As the friendless old hunter crouched

beside his driftwood fire he was filled with the bitter conviction that he, too, had become a part of that lost legion of the town, the soulless underworld where every man has his price. Out of the black drizzle of the night a terrible temptation had swooped down upon the miserable camp beside the clam flat, and had found Butterfly Tom in a moment of weakness.

*At the den of Malay Pete the price of a man is one hundred and fifty dollars.*

The rain sputtered out the sinister message in the hot ashes, and the rising wind took up the same soulless chant as it fluttered away among the hills. Even the waves began to drum out that evil chorus among the boulders.

Butterfly Tom writhed in the smothering tentacles of temptation. Valiantly he fought against the sinister thing that was dragging him down to the level of the slums. But the monster was too strong for the old man's famine-stricken soul. Even the camp-fire seemed to be stained with blood.

The battle was over at last—and lost. Butterfly Tom raised his eyes from the glaring coals, and a melancholy smile flitted across his bloodless lips.

"I got to do it," he groaned. "Got to sell my own boy into slavery; but perhaps it'll make a man of him—perhaps. Anyway it's a whale ship for him."

Tom Waterson staggered to his feet. Without a backward look at the camp, he plodded up the trail that led to the town. He heard the wailing of the wind across the sodden cliffs. The sound took him back to the white miles of the winter wilderness, where the lives were as spotless as the new-fallen snows. He hesitated, even turned as if to retrace his steps. But the gusty wind drew closer.

"It will make a man of him," it seemed to din into old Butterfly's ears.

Once more he turned his face toward the town, a helpless bit of wreckage caught in the drift of an evil tide.

He came up out of the misty night, and slipped into the friendly shadows of Seaboard Street. Keeping close to the moss-grown walls, he groped his way toward the den of Malay Pete.

The Sailor's Roost was at the far end of the alley-like thoroughfare. As the lean mountaineer crept toward it, a door opened in the black face of the building, and for a second a long figure was dimly revealed in the lamplight. Something in the general lines of that unknown person filled Butterfly with alarm. He rubbed his eyes and looked again, but the man had vanished in the night.

Tom Waterson cursed himself for a weakling. What if the fellow had been about the size and build of his son; there were lots of long-legged men in Seattle. Yet he crept closer to the wall as he edged up to the den of the crimp.

He swung back the weather-beaten door and stepped into the smoke-blurred room. Malay Pete was behind the counter. Four sullen-faced men looked up as Tom shuffled over and accosted the landlord.

"Want another man for the whale ship?" Waterson went straight to the point.

"You a sailor? You don't look the part," the shanghai-man bristled. "Come now, what's your game?"

"Don't want a job for myself," Butterfly faltered. "It's my boy I want to send to sea. He's sort of lazy, and I want to make a man of him."

Pete looked his visitor over closely.

"What sort of fellow is this kid of yours?"

"Built just like his dad," Tom boasted. "Long-limbed and strong; he ought to make a good whaler."

"What's the name?" the Malay snapped.

"Waterson—Clarence Waterson—that's the boy. Think you can use him?"

"We ought to find a place for him somewhere. How much do you want out of it?" the shanghai-man dickered.

"I wasn't thinking about money," Butterfly lied bravely. "I was doing it for the boy's own good. But since you've mentioned it—a few dollars wouldn't come amiss."

"That's what Joseph's brothers said when they sold him into Egypt; but they threw the dice to see which one of them got his speckled coat." Pete broke into a sarcastic laugh. "Everybody's got his price—what's yours?"

"Thirty dollars," Butterfly Tom mumbled.

"No cheap rooster about you, is there?" the Malay blustered. "I've bought one man for that ship already—paid fifteen bones for him. But I'll give you your price, seeing you're an old man. You bring the kid down to the foot of Dock Street at midnight, and I'll hand you the rest that's coming to you."

Malay Pete flipped a silver dollar toward Tom. The old man clutched it in his long fingers and tottered out of the room.

Straight for the lighted street the famished old mountaineer hurried. Before a glittering chop-house window he drew up, with the odor of frying food in his hungry nostrils. He reeled toward the door, then hesitated for an instant. His claw-like hand fished into his greasy pocket to make sure that the coin was still there. At the touch of the metal something crawled back to life within the old man's breast. It was the spirit of the real Butterfly Tom—the honor of the Watersons, that had shone so brightly before the blight of the lean days fell.

A half-numbed conscience accused him. *It was blood-money, and his boy was hungry.* He would find him crouching beside the camp fire when he returned, penitent and supperless. But that last evening spent in the driftwood hut must not be cursed by the blight of famine.

With grim, set face, Butterfly Tom pulled himself away from the tempting chop-house, and began peering into other windows that he passed. Down the street he came to a grocery store. Half dazed by the hunger pains that gnawed at his stomach, the old man spent his dollar for bread, meat and coffee.

With the packages tucked under his arm the long, gray mountain-man slipped away into the night, back to the driftwood hut beside the clam flat. The flicker of the camp-fire beckoned to Butterfly Tom as he hurried along the slippery foot-path. Clarence evidently must have heaped the last of their fuel upon the fire, regardless of the morrow. The gray faced man smiled sadly. There would be no to-morrow for the boy. Before another night, the mountain youth would be warming himself in the fo'castle of a whale ship.

The old man drew closer. He quickened his pace, stumbling over the boulders. The misshapen hovel stood out like a black monstrosity in the blood-red glow of the fire. For a moment he thought that their home was ablaze. Then the winding trail shifted his position, and he saw that the boy had moved the fire close to the door of the hut, where he could enjoy the warmth without exposing himself to the misty drizzle of the March night. The father found him stretched at full length upon the dirt floor.

"I got a job," Butterfly Tom called out cheerfully as he puffed up out of the darkness. "Got a chance for us to unload a ship that's coming in from the North to-night, and the fellow gave me a dollar in advance. We'll have a good square meal before we go."

"Don't want it," the boy yawned. "I met a friend up town. We went out to dinner together."

"How did you come to have a friend up town?" The father peered in at the long-legged youth that basked in the firelight.

"I always did make friends," Clarence boasted as he shifted his position on the sand.

In gloomy silence the old man cooked his supper over the smoky fire. In forced silence he ate it in the door of the ramshackle hut. He had denied himself a meal in the chop-house that he might share his good fortune with the boy. As usual the dreams of Butterfly Tom had gone awry.

As he finished his late supper, the old mountaineer looked up at his son. "You're going along and help unload that ship, aren't you?"

"Intended to go all the time—" Clarence shifted his long legs uneasily. He coughed to clear his throat, and continued: "That friend of mine is a longshoreman, and he makes as much as six dollars a night, working on the docks."

"We better be moving along then," Tom suggested, as he shook the last crumbs of the feast from his greasy coat. "They expect the boat to be in sometime before midnight, and it's crawling along that way pretty fast."

Without a further word the two lean mountain-men slouched off up the trail toward the water-front. Never before had Tom seen the boy approach work with the willingness he displayed that night. The old man's conscience began to trouble him. Perhaps he had misjudged his son after all.

To Butterfly Tom the arc lights in the town ahead seemed to be accusing eyes that mocked him out of the darkness of his lost manhood. It had been a bad dream, something too monstrous to be true; everything—the bleak desperation of those clam-cursed months on the beach, as well as the thing he was about to do. It was a hideous nightmare, but Tom Waterson was entangled in its poison tentacles beyond any hope of escape.

With an aching regret his old heart went back to the days before he became a penniless outcast in the land of strangers. With the desperation of despair he tried to glimpse some of the wonderful visions he had seen back there on the sun-flooded breaks of the Salmon River, where the meadow lark sang with wild abandon, and the nesting grouse filled the gauzy miles with their dolorous call. But the wonder world of his dreams had vanished. He had looked upon the fairyland that had seemed so fair in his fancy. He had wandered far afield, just as he had boasted he would do, whenever he could get any of the hill folk to listen to him.

With painful surprise he had learned that it was not butterflies that flitted above the streets of the town, but spiders that crawled along the dark alleys in quest of flies; and he had been a juicy fly as long as his money lasted. Now Tom Waterson himself had become as bad as the worst. He was selling his own son into slavery.

"I don't believe I want that job unloading ship." Butterfly Tom made one last desperate effort to free himself from the soul-blight that had brought him to the frontiers of the damned.

"What's the matter?" the long-legged boy whispered. "Thought you was looking for a job?"

"It isn't our line of work; we're mountain-men," the old man faltered. "Let's tramp it back to the hills. This country isn't like we thought it was going to be—it's bad, Clarence, bad as anything outside of hell! Lord, but I've forgotten what a hand-shake feels like!"

"Aw! What you getting cold feet for now, when we've got a good job?" the long-legged youth whined. "I'm just getting onto the ropes. Bet I could make a lot of money in this country after I got acquainted. I think I'm going to like Seattle."

"My God! My God!" Tom Waterson groaned in his agony, as he saw that last flicker of hope die out in the black gulf of the night.

Thick, soul-searching silence gathered about the two outcasts as they slouched onward—an old man writhing in the grip of remorse, and a long-legged lout that suddenly had been fired with a zeal for work. Like two shadows they came up out of the Puget Sound drizzle, and entered the dimly lighted alleys that clustered back of the Seattle water-front.

A hundred times Butterfly Tom was on the point of confession. The new eagerness in the boy's quest for a job filled him with parental pride, and made him loath himself for the lean months in which he had misjudged his son.

Butterfly Tom had justified his actions by the conviction that a trip to sea would make a man of his lazy son. Now, through some strange miracle, the boy had suddenly grasped a man's full heritage—the right to fight and win, in a land of strangers. In some unknown way he had discovered how to make big money—easy money—as they had dreamed of doing when back in the hills.

Butterfly Tom tried to escape from the sinister tide that was drifting him toward disgrace. But the unexpected actions of the boy had acted like a drug in the old man's blood. Clarence was now leading the way. Reluctantly the father hung back. The boy, in his laudable eagerness, was fairly hurling himself into disaster.

Three blocks ahead, at the end of Dock Street, the hard-faced henchmen of Malay Pete would be waiting for them. It was only the matter of minutes. Now if ever,

must Butterfly Tom damn himself in the eyes of his son. But it was better to have the boy turn away from him in loathing, than to carry that load of guilt upon his mind for the rest of his life. With a mighty effort Tom Waterson threw off the poison tentacles that clung to his bleeding soul. The honor of an unsullied mountain-man rose, lusty-limbed, for the fight.

"I tricked you, Clarence. Stop, it's the shanghai-men—they're waiting up at the end of—"

The words were strangled upon the old man's lips, as bulky shadows hurled themselves out of the alley-darkness and swarmed over the unfortunate men from the hills.

The old mountaineer fought as his lean, highland breed always have fought, without a thought of quarter. But it was for the safety of his son he battled. Never once did he suspicion that Malay Pete had been guilty of trickery. There was some mistake. Something that could be easily explained.

Then the half choked whimper of the boy sounded over the mad scuffle of the conflict. "What you trying to—gag me for? I'm working for Pete. Got fifteen bones for bringing the old man—"

A heavy hand stifled the tearful voice, and Butterfly Tom ceased to struggle against the fate that had marked him for the shifting whale trails, where strong men rave with madness under the grewsome flicker of the aurora.

It was the same old code of the wolf, that had grown poison-fanged in the lonely silence of the clam flat—the last law of the famine camp that had set father and son upon each other's trail in the slave-market of the town.

Like some burial party slipping away from a pest-city in the dead of the night, the low-browed henchmen from the Sailor's Roost plodded along the deserted dock, and slipped their burdens over the rail of the whale ship *Floeburg*—a long-legged youth who whimpered and wept under his gag, and a grim-faced old man from the hills, who went down to defeat with the silence of a veteran.

Butterfly Tom peered about him, but unbroken darkness hung above the ghostly ship. A shadow approached him, and the low voice of Malay Pete spoke out of the gloom.

"Here's your money. Now take it and get back to the hills. You're too simple-minded for this climate."

The old man felt a wad of banknotes being thrust into his greasy pocket. A knife slashed the cords from his wrists.

"Take me—and let the boy go—" Butterfly Tom began. But the sarcastic voice of Pete interrupted, as stout arms set the mountain-man back upon the rough planking of the dock.

"Can't use an old rooster like you on a whaler—that's the only thing that saved your bacon. We intended to get the boy all along. That's why we encouraged him when he offered to bring his father down. Then you showed up, and that made things all the easier. We thought it wouldn't do any harm to throw a good scare into you while we was at it."

A bell tinkled down in the depths of the ghostly ship. A propeller began to stir up the black waters of Puget Sound. There was the sound of running feet, and the casting off of lines; and the whale ship *Floeburg* backed away from the dock, for a three years' voyage among the ice floes.

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# HECKBY'S BIT

By RAMSEY BENSON

*We have had stories of Tom's bit, Dick's bit, and Harry's bit; but Heckby alone achieves the unique. His bit is the cultivation of something you find in the Japanese sauce in the Chinese restaurants, only you won't find any of Heckby's there.*

HECKBY didn't enlist—for three reasons. Two of these were not to be concealed and he made no secret of the other. "I'm too old," he owned up. "'Sides I'm lame. 'Sides I'm a fraidcat."

He could trim a hedge better than anybody and he could cut sprouts as well as need be, but for the most part he fished. That was his calling and he made his living by it. What fish he caught he sold or rather bartered away for tobacco and meal and meat—whatever he and his dog Colonel could eat, in short. Cash didn't interest him; he took it if he couldn't get anything else, but he distrusted it and hastened to be rid of it.

Speaking of the dog, neighbors accounted him almost as much of a character as Heckby himself. They both chewed tobacco, but with the difference that whereas Heckby spat the weed out the dog incontinently swallowed it.

"It gives un heart," Heckby insisted. "If I could swaller my quid thetaway I wouldn't be skeered o' nothin'. Colonel's sure got the heart."

Over at Gilroy's, the big, rich farm adjoining, they could tell a story about Colonel's heart. A tough old woodchuck had established himself under the corncrib there and what he didn't do to the growing garden at night wasn't much. A distinguished nuisance, that woodchuck, and very baffling. They tried poison and they tried traps and they tried shooting, all to no avail. The woodchuck seemingly bore a charmed life. But one day Colonel happened over and without a word from anyone he crawled under the crib and, though the woodchuck was several pounds the heavier, laid hold of the old nuisance and dragged him out. The woodchuck gave a terrific account of himself and Colonel was drenched with his own blood; but he neither faltered nor suffered himself to be hurried. He waited till he had his adversary right where he wanted him and then shook him to death.

"'Count of un swallerin' his quid!" crowed Heckby, proudly, and cut off a big chew and gave it to the dog on the spot, in token of his approbation.

He knew how to fish. Don't think that because his notions were like nobody else's they impaired his mastery of the art. He had his regular beat—forty miles of deeps and shallows up and down South Fork that were like an open book to him; he covered it incredibly often, considering how lame he was; and the fish he landed beat anything—tons of fish, his notions notwithstanding.

"You can't fish," he maintained, "without you're at peace with the world. If you're sour and out o' sorts the fish won't take your hook. Leastways they won't take mine. If I'm that way I don't try. If I've got a grouch I stay to home till it's wore out."

Neighbors weren't altogether agreed about Heckby, whether or not he believed what he was saying. Some thought he did and some thought he didn't. If he did of course it made him out pretty simple. You got that impression of him. Not a fool exactly, but leaning that way pretty strongly.

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sport come down here all fussed up like a lord an' he didn't ketch so much as a bullhead, an' I'd foller right after him an' pull out the bass hand over hand. Maybe he'd sing out an' want to know how I did it, but I'd not tell him—'twouldn't do no good."

He had no trouble disposing of his fish because it was the cheapest food in the market by a wide margin. Method in that, too. "If I was to be graspin' an' run the price up like I might, the fish," he declared, "would turn me down. I tell you fishin' is partickler business. You've got to walk mighty keerful."

Gilroy raised everything that could be raised in that country—tobacco and meat and meal. He had hedges to trim and spruts to cut, too; and if Heckby worked for anybody it was more than likely to be Gilroy. In the spring of 1916 he complained that the fishing had gone poor. "Hit's the war!" he grumbled. "Fish is plum' disgusted with the human species, an' I dunno's I blame 'em." He quit his beat and went to work for Gilroy.

A dollar a day was all the wages he would take, though his services at the going rate were worth twice as much. He worked for Gilroy three weeks without a skip, and that figured up to eighteen dollars.

"Take it all in tobacco?" Gilroy asked him, jokingly.

"No, you can pay me in wheat, an' I'll come an' get it when I'm ready for it," Heckby replied.

Something new. What did Heckby want of eighteen dollars worth of wheat?

HECKBY couldn't read, but he could listen. Grant Gilroy, the farmer's young son, studied the war news as he studied none of his lessons in school; and, while the family grew very tired of his discourses, Heckby liked nothing better than to have the boy come out where he was at work and talk of sectors and salients. Sometimes the work would be forgotten while the two of them marked off the lines of battle in the dirt, with rocks to designate the strong places and sprouts for squadrons.

You couldn't accuse Heckby of speaking first and thinking afterwards. He thought from April till August without saying a word—that is, a word in the way of prophecy. Of course he may have let fall a hint or two of what was taking form in his mind, but not till August, 1916, did he come right out and prophesy.

What he foretold was of the weightiest character. "In six months," he solemnly affirmed, "we'll be into the war, too—clear up to our necks. I mean we uns—these United States. Hear me!"

Neighbors heard him, but they didn't heed, unless it was to make fun of him. They winked behind Heckby's back. The prophecy was weighty enough in itself, but coming from him it was simply amusing. He took himself so seriously, too—that was the funniest part of all. Those there were who couldn't be satisfied merely to wink behind his back—they had to hurry away and laugh.

In August he was missing. The haunts which had known him knew him no more. His beat up and down the creek took him past a dozen farms, he couldn't quit it for many days without causing neighbors to ask what had become of him; and when it developed that no man had hired him they were concerned, the Gilroys especially.

Their farm lay nearest and it was in a way their place to see about Heckby. Because he was very busy himself Gilroy was for sending Grant over, but the woods were thick and the way was lonesome and the boy hung back. "Maybe he's croaked down there all by himself!" he objected, uneasily; and so the farmer went.

Heckby hadn't croaked—far from it. Gilroy heard the sound of a busy ax before he came in sight of the fisherman's shack, and the sound was sign enough that the worst hadn't come to pass. But it was a sign of wonderment, too. What was the fellow about? Gilroy thought of firewood, but Heckby's manner of living from hand to mouth called for no such ado about firewood. It was certainly some ado. The woodland rang with the blows, and right away a big tree came crashing down to the ground.

Then in a moment Gilroy emerged into

a clearing he had never seen before—a stretch of several acres, level as a floor; a pretty field, of the richest bottom.

Heckby was making the chips fly at the farther edge. He had a fire going and as fast as he trimmed the brush away he piled it up to burn. The green branches crackled and hissed, and Gilroy had to speak loudly to make himself heard.

"Going to have you a garden spot?" he inquired, measuring in his mind the amount of labor it had taken to achieve so striking a result.

Heckby paused and leaned on his ax. "No," he replied, "it ain't no garden spot. I'm goin' to sow wheat. A year from now we'll be into the war an' we'll have the hull world to feed. The hull world! We'll need all the wheat we kin raise."

Gilroy stared. Somehow the prophecy didn't seem so funny. Heckby seemed deserving of more respect, somehow.

"Don't guess but I'll have my seed-bed ready by the last of the month an' I'll be over for that wheat directly. September's a right pretty time to sow, I reckon," quoth the fisherman, and bent to his task.

It was no trifling task. That was a hot August, and down there in the bottoms the woods shut out every breath of air. It took heart, of a sort, to do what Heckby was doing.

He helped Gilroy kill hogs at Thanksgiving, and Grant talked to him about the U-boats. "The German word for submarine is *untersee*," the boy expounded, learnedly, while Heckby swashed the scalding water over the fat, fair carcasses. "U is short for *untersee*. We might call our submarines S-boats, only we don't. We haven't any to speak of."

The U-boats were very busy in those days, and Heckby listened to the tale of their dreadful doings. "The old Geyser!" he commented. He meant the Kaiser.

"Uncle Sam will have to do something about it," Grant declared. "Germany as good as slaps him in the face. Who's going to stand still and let somebody slap him in the face?"

Heckby didn't say much about the U-boats. He talked about the weather. "Who ever did see such a dry fall?" he demanded.

Nobody had. Gilroy and two or three others helping or standing about confessed that the drouth beat anything of the kind in their experience. Not since the last week in June had there been rain in sufficient quantities.

"My wheat," related Heckby, "never did start to grow. The seed's there in the ground just like it come out of the bin. It orter to be tall enough by now to stand up an' wave in the wind an' here it ain't started."

The men aired their various opinions of the prospects. Gilroy thought there was plenty of time for wheat yet. "The seed isn't being harmed in the ground; it'll green up when the rains set in," he predicted, cheerfully.

"Nineteen-one was a bad fall and we got a crop all right," recalled a neighbor who had stopped to guess the weights of the hogs.

The rains set in presently and the wheat greened up, just as Gilroy had foretold; but there came no snow to cover it. It rained and rained, and there was thunder and lightning in January; and thunder and lightning in January meant cold weather coming; and the cold weather came with a vengeance, and the frost struck deep into the wet ground and heaved the plants out root and branch.

Goodbye wheat, in short—at least winter wheat.

Heckby neglected his beat. He worked for anyone who would hire him at anything he was offered. He even went so far as to solicit employment, a thing unheard of, and he took his pay in cash. Between the middle of January and the middle of March he earned upwards of twenty dollars, and, so far as the neighbors knew, it was the most money he had ever possessed at one time.

No highway led to his place down by the creek, and the path he used most crossed Gilroy's pasture. One day in March Gilroy encountered him there with a sack on his back.

"What you got, Heckby?" the farmer inquired.

"Spring wheat," Heckby proudly informed him. "Hit's from Dakoty. Had it shipped in. I'm packin' it over from Wackford."

Wackford was the nearest railroad station. Wheat, by the way, was over two dollars, and the freight charges from Dakota no trifle. The three big sacks which Heckby packed across from Wackford accounted for the most of that twenty.

He was going to sow it—spring wheat, though spring wheat had never been grown so far south. "It won't stool out, and the first hot wind will fire it," Gilroy warned him. Others warned him likewise as the opportunity presented itself. But Heckby's mind was made up. "Nevertheless an' notwithstandin'!" he answered to every admonition, and went on and sowed his wheat. "Mebbe won't be no hot wind. I've saw springs when there wasn't any hot wind," he argued.

The spring wheat was a tale soon told. It started in grand style and it looked so pretty that neighbors came miles to see it. Certainly it was a sight, so thick and even and densely green. But the hot winds came blowing shortly, and shortly there was nothing to be seen but shriveled, spindling stalks that couldn't possibly amount to anything.

"That means corn," remarked Heckby, quietly. "I wonder had I orter plow the ground all over or will diskin' of it answer?"

THE mystery of the root-louse was never cleared up. The experiment stations camped on the trail of the pernicious creature but made nothing of him, that is, nothing to use against him. They studied his habits. They learned that he multiplied by the million and that when he felt hungry he attacked the roots of the corn and sucked out the sap. But they couldn't make him stop.

It was all up with the corn when the root-louse started operations. If he had a redeeming trait it was a certain moderation, as it were, whereby he didn't attack all of the corn. He didn't make a clean sweep, like the chinchbug or the grasshopper. The experiment stations described him as sporadic, for the present. Get that—for the present. The experiment stations couldn't promise that the root-louse might not, another year, make as clean a sweep as any of them.

There was some reason to believe that he worked more destructively in low land. The ridges, where the corn didn't grow so thriftily, seemed to enjoy a degree of immunity—for the present.

Heckby's patch lay low.

Of course he didn't reckon without pests. Nobody did. Always there were pests waiting to do their mischief. But it was the old familiar enemies that he thought of, cutworms particularly, because the soil was so raw and crude with trash. "If I can get by the cutworms I won't need to worry," Heckby assured himself.

He got by the cutworms with flying colors. Truly it was astonishing how little damage those ancient pests did. Probably it wasn't their year under the dispensation which pests obey. Anyway they held off. "I don't guess they've took ten stalks in the hull patch," Heckby exulted.

The corn shot up to the height of a man's knees. Its leaves spread out till you could scarcely see the rows. There came a day and a night when it grew near a foot—twenty-four hot, muggy hours such as farmers hail with joy when they have a crop of corn in the balance. A day and a night of distinguished prosperity and then, within a few hours, the stalks turned a sickly yellow and hung their heads.

Heckby had never heard of the root-louse. He looked at his corn and hurried over to ask Gilroy about it. He wanted Gilroy to come and see. "I never did know corn to turn so peaked all to once!" protested Heckby.

But Gilroy could tell him without going. He had some low land of his own, overgrown with corn that had been corn indeed until the calamity came upon it without remedy. "It's the root-louse. You might as well hang up your powderhorn," Gilroy declared, grimly.

IT was July—past the middle of the month, too. But Heckby didn't hang up his powderhorn.

Not a word by way of mourning for the corn. It was gone and he let it go. Before he went back home after hearing the doom of his crop pronounced he struck a bargain with Gilroy whereby he was to have the use of Gilroy's horses for a few days, paying in work after awhile. "I'll git some good of the corn if I plow it under green," he pointed out, sagely.

You never caught Heckby crying over spilled milk.

He had great respect for learning and he believed Grant Gilroy knew more than anybody. When he came for the horses next day he asked Grant to look into his books and see if soy beans were properly a food for the human species.

"It's got to be either beans or millet, the season bein' so fur along," he explained. "Millet's good feed for sheep an' mutton's good feed for men, but that looks like goin' all the way round Robin Hood's barn. By the time the sheep has got my millet made into mutton them Germans 'll most likely be whipped. I want to git quick action—I want to raise something men can eat right now an' so I'm askin' you to look into them books o' yourn an' see if soy beans is rightly et by the human species."

They were. Grant looked into his books and discovered that soy beans were eaten by the Japs and highly esteemed. Heckby glowed.

"Them Japs is the best fighters in the world, I reckon," he chuckled. "Lord, but they did lick them Proosians!"

"Russians, you mean," prompted Grant.

"I mean Roosians," Heckby corrected himself. "If soy beans is what they eat I can't do better. Mebbe it's all for the best after all. Mebbe soy beans is what I had orter figgered on in the first place."

He plowed the green corn under and he harrowed the land back and forth and up and down till he had it as powdery as flour and every pesky weed in it killed. When he went forth to sow, the seed he scattered fell upon good ground, and if it didn't yield an hundredfold there was nothing in prospects.

Two weeks from the day the root-louse sealed the doom of the corn, the beans were pushing themselves up out of the black loam and opening their leaves to the air. In another two weeks the field was once more overspread with living green.

"I reckon beans is the growin'est things in the world an' I never did see beans to grow like them there," boasted Heckby.

A STRANGE thing happened that summer. Some men came through with a band of hogs, driving them overland. They were razorback hogs, bred wild back in the hills—gaunt, hungry creatures, accustomed to forage for a living and seeking what they might devour.

The parties behind the enterprise had two irons in the fire. Further west conditions had so changed in late years that the burro, or little pack donkey, though he had been in his day the salvation of the country, was become something of a superfluity. There wasn't much for him to do any more, he couldn't be kept from multiplying prodigiously and while he wasn't a positive nuisance like the jackrabbit, people were beginning to wonder what they should do with him. But when somebody discovered that a burro's flesh could be made into excellent tankage, that best of all feeds for fattening hogs, it looked like a way out.

That was the amount of it—cheap tankage to the west and uncounted razorbacks to the east. Why shouldn't the two be brought together and afford big profits? Pork was selling for $15 a hundred on the hoof and that was enough to justify considerable risks.

Tankage and razorbacks made a strong combination—so much had been demonstrated. Feed a razorback all the tankage he could eat and it wasn't any time at all until you had a top hog. Then, too, razorbacks could travel on their own feet. You could move them from place to place without having to split up your profits with the railroads. Here was a band of more than a hundred which had made their twenty miles a day from the start, with no more to eat than they picked up along the way.

The men always tried to find a pasture for the hogs at night. Gilroy had a

pasture and for a moderate consideration he let the men turn the hogs into it.

The pasture adjoined Heckby's patch of beans.

Pending the harvest of his crop, which might be three or four weeks away, the fisherman was back on his beat. He had a troutline out that night ten miles up the creek, and he stayed with it from dark till daylight. He didn't get home till near noon the next day, in fact. The men and hogs had been gone since early morning.

Nobody saw Heckby when he came home—he took the bank path and passed the houses at a distance. Nobody saw him till towards night. Then he showed up at Gilroy's wearing a serious air, not downright disturbed, you understand—just serious and thoughtful.

"If they ain't hogtracks I don't know what they be," he observed.

That reminded them to tell him about the strange thing which had happened. Heckby listened attentively and as he listened his face lighted up. "Them hogs," he said, "will sure be et by somebody."

Beyond a doubt! That was the purpose—to turn them into food just as quickly as the thing could be done.

Heckby threw off his serious air. He laughed right out. "Four acres of beans into a hundred hogs!" Heckby chuckled.

They didn't understand him, and he conducted them across the pasture to the edge of his patch. There a glance was enough—they understood at once. A rod or so of the fence had been lifted loose from the posts, and beyond there wasn't a bean left. The field was reaped to the last stem.

Gilroy flew into a passion. "The contemptible thieves! Of course those men tore that fence loose! We'll put right after them and show them!" he raged.

But Heckby only laughed. "I was sure beat when I seen it first," he confessed, "but the more I thought about it the more I didn't mind. I druther hit was the beans that was goin' to be et, still I don't guess but most everybody'll like the meat better. Anyhow it counts."

"But your pay—the pay for all your labor! You don't get a penny for all you've done!" expostulated Gilroy. "If 'twas me I'd get out an attachment and send the sheriff after them. I'd show 'em!"

Heckby shook his head. "I didn't want no pay. All I wanted was to help feed the world an' the way hit looks to me I've done did so!" he replied. "'Sides, if it's a lawsuit you mean, I never wasn't into no lawsuit in my life an' I don't want to be in no lawsuit. Not for me!"

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FOR JULY: TO VIOLETS, $100, *by Ramsey Benson.* It is the small things that count. One day Bilby misses the 5:23 and commutes homeward on the 5:47 with the $100-a-month men. Then he is carried by his station at Blithedale and has to walk home from Sandhurst. Bilby is never the same after that. Bilby of the Blithedale élite becomes a common commuter of Sandhurst, the dollar-down suburb where the trains stop with reluctance.

# OFT IN THE STILLY NIGHT

By GEORGE GILBERT

*There are some judges who make law instead of following it, and some juries that cannot help being prejudiced, and some melodies that are worth several brief cases full of citations.*

IT was the *Banner*, ever vigilant and eager to give to its readers, so the editor said, all the news of the week, that aroused us to the importance of Terry vs. Hoskin, which had been on the County Court calendar for over a year, adjourned from time to time because of some of the legal reasons that delight lawyers but do not enlighten laymen. Said the *Banner*:

"In Terry vs. Hoskin, Barham will enjoy the trial before County Judge Hakes of a real *cause célèbre*, as the French say when they refer to a thumping big lawsuit. The case is a test case on which hangs the outcome of many others throughout the state, all involving the same disputed points over water powers and rights. The big power people in New York, desirous of safeguarding their interests, which are represented in the Terry side of this action, are determined to have the case construed, in the lower courts, in their favor, so they will have the vantage ground when the inevitable appeal is made to the higher courts. So they have engaged to represent them in this case Eleazer Smoot, head of the great law firm of Smoot, Wooyard and Smoot, New York. Nominally this great lawyer will be the counsel for William Terry. William Barnstable, whom we all call "Our Billy," will represent Elisha Hoskin."

I stopped Barnstable as he went down to the railroad station that night to get a letter off on the last mail. I accused him of writing that piece in the *Banner*. He grinned and went on, his long black coat and his limp-brimmed black slouch hat flapping, his lanky legs functioning inside his black trousers like a pair of double-jointed compasses. We had all watched with satisfaction his rise from precocious boyhood to political and legal leadership of our county. Educated in our schools, going to our church and Sunday school, finishing his preparation for the bar in old Lije Miller's law office and succeeding to old Lije's practice when that keen witted practitioner had died, Barnstable had completed his university course in human experience by marrying Kate Miller, old Lije's daughter. From the time he had made his first appearance in public by reciting "Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night" at the Fireman's Fair, until now, he had never taken a single step out of the Barham perspective. From boyhood to middle age he had been "Our Billy."

Barnstable ordinarily plays a good game of pool. I was surprised, therefore, when he came into my place the next morning and lost a game each with three or four ordinary players, like Paul Bransome, Chick Divine, Harry Lawrence, and Dana Hinman. That afternoon he happened to be on the walk outside his office when Pete Jenkins' wife came driving Pete's new fast horse into town, and I saw him holding the horse while she went into Allen and Green's to trade. The next day he lost some more games of pool and assisted old Mrs. Parse with her pension check at the bank and in other ways accumulated merit.

But I thought Billy Barnstable did heap it on rather too much when the *Banner*, the Thursday before the trial was to open, printed a little item that had the signs and symbols of Barnstable composition all over it, telling how a committee of "our most distinguished citizens" had been named to oversee the reception to Eleazer Smoot

when that great man should arrive in Barham.

The *Banner* suggested as the members of that committee Ralph Elwell, who had piled up considerable money shaving farm mortgages and never before had been honored in any way, not to speak of being honored in print, James Songster, an amiable man whose wife had some money and had made every man in Barham sick of him by bragging what a fine husband he was, and John Parsons, a hardware merchant, who had been a copperhead during the Civil War. The committee, duly puffed up, let it be known that it had jointly and severally accepted the honor thus thrust upon it and them.

"Billy," I asked, as Barnstable leaned his chair back against the wall that evening, after the other pool players had gone home, "aren't you taking a lot of pains with this Terry vs. Hoskin case?"

"Why yes, if it is Terry vs. Hoskin," he chuckled. "But isn't it more like Smoot vs. Barnstable now?"

It did strike me that way, looking the ground over in the light of recent Barnstable maneuvers. I agreed with him.

"And it may look like Smoot vs. Barnstable, but really it is *going to be* Smoot vs. Moore. Ever hear of Moore?"

"No. There is no Moore interested in the Hoskin mill dam, Billy."

"Wait and see," he laughed. "Ordinarily I wouldn't take so much pains with a case where an outside lawyer comes to Barham against me," he went on, "but I must now. Hoskin hasn't a leg to stand on in court—"

"Then you oughtn't to defend him, according to what I've read of legal ethics, Billy," I suggested mildly.

"Legal pitchforks," he snorted. "Hoskin could be beat on law, but he has justice and Tom Moore on his side."

"I don't know Moore," I insisted, "so tell me why Hoskin's case is weak. There's no one here to listen."

"No harm if there was, as Smoot knows all about it. Al Hoskin's father, who owned that dam before Al, gave to Jim Terry's dad a right to use the water power for the Terry sawmill on the other side of the creek, half the time, for a yearly rental of five hundred dollars. After that arrangement had run for ten years, Terry bought the new mill, farther upstream and Hoskin gave him one year's rent of the half of the old dam for a quit claim, releasing all the old dam back to Hoskin again. That quit claim was never filed on the county records. It was burned when the Hoskin grist mill burned twenty years ago. Old Terry never tried to revive his interest, but young Terry has done it. Every one that knew of the quit claim at first hand is dead. No one alive now ever saw it. We'll simply go in court and swear that such and such were the facts; Smoot will bring in the original lease of half the waterpower in the Hoskin dam site; and if Terry wins, the power interests that want to put their big dam here on the Hoskin site, will take the power half the time, there being no especial months mentioned in the old lease. The power interests will claim the right to that half of the year when the creek gives the most power and leave Hoskin the had half and nag him till he sells out for a tithe of what his outfit is worth."

"And where does Tom Moore come in?"

"Never you mind Tom Moore. But I want you to do me a favor. You've got one of those old wax-cylinder music boxes. And you know how to make records of voices, because I remember years ago you took down with it the records we've got in the Town Hall of the Old Vets' Glee Club. Is that machine in working order?"

"Yes."

"Well, I was out to-day to see Al Hoskin about the case; and do you know that his aunt, Abigail, is quite spry yet? I got to talking with her about old times, and she sang 'Oft In the Stilly Night' for me, just like she's sung it so many times.

"I'd like to have you go to Hoskin's and take your wax-cylinder machine with a new wax record on it and record Miss Abigail's voice before it is gone from us, and we can put that in the Town Hall collection, where we've got so many others to remind the new generation about old times and old timers."

"Anything else?"

"When the record is made, some time before Monday, give it to me, so I can turn it over to the village fathers myself."

Barnstable stalked out, humming a bar or two of the tune to himself, and I got out the old wax-cylinder recording machine and tinkered her up to see that she was all right. Before I went to bed that old tune got to running through my head, and every time it repeated I thought of Miss Abigail Hoskin.

Miss Abigail was a Barham institution in other years. Losing her lover in the Civil War, she had set out to mother all the old soldiers and their families. Having means of her own, she had had plenty of time to nurse the sick, to be around when the babies came, to give advice, to take in girls who had gone a bit wrong and put them in the way of becoming respectable again. And every time she was out nursing or setting things to rights in a house where death had paid a visit or hushing a baby into its first sleep in this world, she would hum, over and over, "Oft In the Stilly Night."

"Why are you so fond of that tune, Miss Abigail," I asked her once, years before.

"Because it was Abraham Lincoln's favorite tune," she said, "and another man's."

As a girl of fifteen she had been engaged to the "other man," and he was one of the boys who put their strength at the service of the Union in the war's last months and helped to win.

I won't say that Miss Abigail expected me when I arrived at the Hoskin house. Yet I had the impression that she was not surprised when I set the machine down, put the horn onto it and asked her to face toward the machine and sing "Oft In the Stilly Night." And she sang it well, considering her sixty-five years. Her voice had lost a note or two in the upper register and some of the lower tones were a bit rough, and anyway she sang about as a mothering woman will when she is crooning away to herself over a sick child or man. As I saw her erect form, her little corkscrew curls, her horn-rimmed specs, her keen, shrewd, grey-blue eyes, her black silk dress and remembered what she and that tune meant to Barham and Barham folks, I was glad that Billy Barnstable had stopped in the midst of his mad career of popularizing Eleazer Smoot long enough to think of having Miss Abbie's tune added to the Town Hall collection, to go along with the tunes sung by the G. A. R. quartette, the speech of Judge Bartlett, Alonson Beebe's reading of the Declaration, and Reverend Peters' "Talk To Newly Married Couples," and other vocal gems of Barham of which we were proud.

"Turn the record over to Jed Wilkins," Barnstable said to me, when I told him that night that the record was made. "I'm so plagued busy with the big case that I haven't time to bother with it now. But I'll see that the *Banner* next week gives you credit for your good work. I'll write the piece myself. You know I sometimes help out the editor—"

He was gone, up the street. I found Wilkins and gave him the record.

Monday brought the great Eleazer Smoot, towering toward the sky in shiny high hat, black broadcloth, immaculate linen, gold headed cane, and big tortoise-shell rimmed eyeglasses. He was received by the reception committee of our choicest unpopularities and held forth at the Business Men's Club, where Barnstable shook his hand cordially. Smoot, delighted to be thus honored, beamed on every one and even called a few "my good man," in a tone that would have called for open resentment had he not been a guest.

Well, the trial went along as such trials will. Smoot proved that his client, Terry, had a lease that had no time mentioned in it for lapsing and that Terry had tendered five hundred dollars a year the past two years for the use of half the mill dam rights, that his father had always claimed to own that half interest in the use of the water. That last claim we all knew was a lie, but there was no proof to the contrary. Hoskin had denied him his rights, Terry said, and so he had sued to recover them. He had the lease. It was a valid lease. Billy Barnstable never asked a question to bother Smoot and Terry or the other Terry witnesses, and when the Terry side called Hoskin I could see that

even the jury was impressed with the strength of the Terry side of the case. Even Dana Hinman and Chick Divine, who had won the most of those suspiciously easy pool games from Our Billy and so were naturally inclined to regard him as their friend and equal, paid more and more attention to Smoot and his easy gestures and flow of grand language. As for Pete Jenkins, whose horse Billy had held when Mrs. Pete had gone in the store to trade, he maintained an attitude of easy neutrality. After Terry finished, and Hoskin had been compelled to admit, under Smoot's questioning, that he never had seen the quit claim that old Terry was supposed to have signed, waiving his rights in the mill dam, Smoot brought out from town and county officials, past and present, that no such deed had been filed.

"In short," said Smoot, in his summing-up afterwards, "we have tradition and rumor against fact. I rely upon the facts and upon the jury, whose *duty*"—he bore down on that word as if daring them to violate their oaths—"it is to bring in a verdict for my client, Mr. Terry."

Billy Barnstable called no witnesses. There was much disappointment at that. But something happened during his address to the jury. Just as he began, Miss Abigail Hoskin who had been sitting quietly in the rear of the courtroom, came down the aisle, in behind the rail and sat down beside Al, putting a hand on his shoulder. When she had done that you could hear the women sigh a bit and the men shift their feet and see some of them shift their quids. You see, for the whole of the day we had been living on the Smoot plane—high and mighty. Miss Abbie's coming and sitting beside Al that way brought us all down to Barham levels again, bango!

Barnstable made a mighty queer summing-up. He kept away from the case and kept talking about what a nice young man Al Hoskin was and how his father had been a good man before him and during the war had never pressed anyone for payment of debts if there was a son or father in the Union army and how Al was the favorite of Miss Abbie Hoskin. In sketching out Al's history he managed some way to keep Miss Abbie and her nursings and babytendings and services to the dead popping up, and once, when he had strayed clear off the legal track, Eleazer Smoot objected to the latitude the other counsel was taking.

"We permit considerable latitude in summings-up in this court," Judge Bartlett said, rather sharply. "I rule that the counsel for the defendant proceed."

"You can't rule that way," said Smoot, arching his back like a cat on a line fence.

"I can't?" demanded Judge Bartlett.

"No, Your Honor. I can cite a dozen cases where the judges of the highest courts have ruled that counsel must keep closer to the case at hand than this counsel has so far—"

"I can't rule that way?" persisted Judge Bartlett, his voice dangerously mild.

"No, you can't because the authorities, the latest decisions—"

"You listen to me," the Judge said, his voice ringing out clear and vibrant, "while I rule. I rule that counsel proceed as he has been. Have you any later decision than that, Mr. Smoot?"

There was a little titter in the courtroom, and the jury smiled. The very ghost of a smile flickered over Billy Barnstable's face.

Well, Barnstable finished, the judge charged the jury, and we went out to eat, expecting the verdict when the jury had had their supper at the Eagle House.

The door to the jury room of our court house opens into the court itself, and the door has six little panes of glass in the upper part of it. One of those panes had been broken and instead of frosted glass, a clear-glass pane had been put it its place by an economical Board of Supervisors years before. I had discovered that by sitting in a certain place in the courtroom, I could see into the jury room and I always managed to get that seat when a big case was on. I had it that night when the jury came marching back from supper and after they were in their room and the kerosene lights lighted, I could see the men once in a while as they drew a chair up, in range of my vision.

Judge Bartlett came in and sat on the bench, waiting. Smoot and Barnstable and their clients came in. Miss Abbie did not come back.

Well, I was sitting there, catching a sight of a juror or two once in a while and thinking how poorly Billy Barnstable had handled that case and how it would hurt the jury to decide against Al Hoskin but how they would have to, because the facts were against him and the law in that case had to abide by the facts, when from the window of the Town Hall, just across a little strip of green from the court house, I heard a tune by the old G. A. R. quartette, "Marching Through Georgia." Jed Wilkins had a habit of putting the old records on the machine sometimes when he went in the hall evenings to clean up and dust off the things in the historical collection. No one took it amiss of him, as he was careful. Then the old machine sounded forth "John Brown's Body," and "Hail Columbia." About that time I lined my eye up with the clear-glass pane in the jury room door and there was that whole lot of grown up children in there, getting their minds off their disagreeable duty by gathering around the window of their room, that opened right onto the Town Hall side of the green, and they were listening to the old tunes of Freedom. Then, first I knew, Jed Wilkins had started to try the new Abbie Hoskin record I'd turned over to him. The simple tune (she never sang to accompaniment) came floating in to us and to them:

"Oft in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me."

"Well," I thought, "that'll remind Dana Hinman of the time he was sick with diphtheria and Miss Abbie nursed him when all other nurses were afraid to go."

And when the tune told about "all the friends," why I thought of how Miss Abbie had nursed Divine and the wife of Peters and I don't know how many more.

Phrase after phrase came out to us—my machine took the old long cylinders; Miss Abbie had sung the song in full, and when the song told of "the words of love then spoken," referring to the years of childhood, I happened to be looking at Terry and he had slumped away down in his chair and I thought I heard him groan. Then I remembered that when his stepmother had been mean to him and he had almost gone wrong, it was Miss Abbie who had given him meals and a room.

The record was played just once and it was the last Jed Wilkins put on to entertain himself that night. Pretty soon there was a shuffling and scraping of chairs in the jury room, and the twelve good men and true came filing out.

"We find for the defendant," was the word that Jenkins, the foreman, gave us. It started us, from what we had heard of the case in court. It was against the evidence, but we liked it.

"Your Honor, we move for a new trial," began Eleazer Smoot.

"We do *not!*" It was Terry.

"This power corporation in New York nagged me into this suit," he yelled, "but I'm sick of it. My own father told me once that he had given that quit claim to Al's father along about the panic of '73 and I'm a skunk to be here, suing Al, who is the favorite of Miss Abbie who kept me from going skallyhooting to hell—"

"I resign from the case, Your Honor," interrupted Smoot, beginning to gather up his law books, ready to fade away.

"Your resignation is accepted," the Court beamed at him.

"Jed," I asked Wilkins the next day, "how did you come to play 'Oft in the Stilly Night' last night?"

"I never did," he said, "I just played some of them G. A. R. tunes and Miss Abbie's nursin' song. I don't know what it is, but it's pretty. Billy Barnstable, he told me to-day what a fine tune that was, and I remembered that it was, too, though I'd most forgot it, it's so long since I heard her sing it when my girl Jennie died. I just wanted to hear it again. Billy Barnstable, he says it was writ by a man named Tom Moore, and I wouldn't be surprised, because it sounds just like it was a tune writ by a man named Tom or Dick or Harry. But I don't know anything about that 'Stilly Night' song. Must be an oprayetick piece that I never heard of."

# THE BISHOP OF THE STREET

By WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

*On the way to his office, a Broad Street financier stops to listen to a street preacher who is throwing rocks at the Philistines. The financier picks up some food for thought that doesn't go well with his lunch.*

IT was just one o'clock when Marcellus left the Downtown Club in Pine Street. He had lunched well. He purred with contentment. He felt unusually fit.

There was a fight on, and he was ready for it. His office was on Broad Street, just across the way from the Stock Exchange. He turned south into William Street, then west onto Wall.

Underneath the statue of George Washington—the statue with the polished legs—he paused a moment. He was attracted by a crowd, a crowd that was gathered almost in front of the Stock Exchange itself.

The presence of this crowd did not startle him, it did not even mystify him. From his office windows for five years, during the summer months, he had watched this crowd almost daily. The first time it had gathered he had wondered; after that he had regarded it simply as one of the incidents of the Street. He had ignored it.

Now, however, he had all the afternoon to accomplish just one thing. He was in no hurry. He moved slowly across Broad Street at the point where it conjoins with Wall and Nassau.

He took up his position on the outskirts of the crowd. In the center stood a man, bare-headed. He stood upon a rudely fashioned stool; between his feet there lay his Bishop's hat. It was a mere fragment that caught the attention of Marcellus—caught and held it.

"A pagan chief," this man was saying, "builded a pyramid of skulls, skulls of his victims; and only scholars know his name to-day. There was another man who, on his knees, painted angels' faces; men cross a continent to look upon his works—I wonder why?"...

This man was Right Reverend William Wilkinson, the Bishop of the Street.

Marcellus listened, listened for ten minutes. The man upon the stool was flaying Wall Street. He held the sword of righteousness in his right hand and he knew it, and the crowd knew it. He was smiting Wall Street hip and thigh.

"Huh," muttered Marcellus to himself, as he moved toward Broad Street, "what rot! Easy to say. Talk is cheap. He ought to have my job."

Marcellus' job consisted chiefly in owning much and adopting ways and means to acquire much more. His pet proclivity was Structural Iron and Steel. Structural Iron and Steel was not a stock quotation, it was a business; and Marcellus owned it, lock, stock and barrel.

He ascended in the private elevator that opened directly into his private office. His private office, one of a huge suite that occupied two floors, was upon the Broad Street side. It was empty save for the presence of one man who stood at a window gazing intently, so it seemed, at the crowd across the street.

The man turned and faced Marcellus. He was young, clean cut, clean shaven and tanned by wind and sun.

"Hello, Sargent," said Marcellus crisply. "Just got back from Europe?"

"Just got back," returned the younger man, with a tone of deference, though he did not add "from Europe," a fact that Marcellus remembered later on. "Just got back, and—"

Marcellus waved his hand and shook his head. "Don't tell me anything about your travels, or the war," he exclaimed, "until we're through! You came back in the

nick of time, Sargent. I'm going to start in to skin Flavel, and you've got to do the skinning. Bring in all the stuff, all the Flavel stuff, everything, and we'll start in right away."

Sargent was his confidential man. It was said upon the Street that Sargent was the highest paid underling in the world.

Marcellus settled back into his chair. He purred once more with contentment. His digestion was perfect. His ample luncheon had satisfied him. He yawned pleasantly.

It was perhaps ten minutes before Sargent returned. With him was some supernumerary, who bore with him half a dozen boxes full of correspondence. The supernumerary laid them on the desk and disappeared. Sargent remained standing.

"My boy," said Marcellus, "let me tell you a few things that maybe you don't know. Flavel has had the nerve to put in his bid on the Tri-State tubes. He's had more nerve than that; he has built a plant on the Jersey meadows next door to ours. He has done more than that; he has tossed his gauntlet in my face, Sargent. He means business. There's fire in his eye. He's started out to trim us, Sargent. We've got to trim him first.

Sargent nodded. "I'm with you sir." He started to open one of the letter files, but Marcellus once more shook his head.

"Never mind all that stuff, Sargent!" he exclaimed. "That's dead. We'll start fresh. Somebody is backing Flavel; he's getting money somewhere—money and credit. He's not getting it here, of that I am satisfied."

"Where then?" queried Sargent.

"There's only one place he can get it," went on Marcellus, "and that place is Newark. Sargent," he added, "I'll tell you what you do and do it right away. You put on your hat and coat. You go to Newark. You see the head of every bank in Newark and tell 'em this for me: that if they extend any kind of credit to this man, Flavel, I'll sick Wall Street on 'em. Tell them to foreclose every note he's made and do it quick. You understand?"

Sargent looked him squarely in the eye. "I understand, sir!" he exclaimed.

He stood silent for a considerable space of time.

"Well, be about it," said Marcellus at length. "All you've got to do is to take the Hudson tube. You can see Ropes face to face in about forty minutes. You can get to all of 'em by six o'clock."

Sargent nodded soberly. "I can get to all of them, Mr. Marcellus," he returned, in measured tones, "but I won't."

"What do you mean—you won't?" snapped Marcellus.

"I mean what I say," returned Sargent evenly. "When you spoke of a fight with Flavel, I felt just as ready for it as you did. I eat fights, sir; you know that. But I won't go to Newark, I won't ask the Newark banks to do a thing like that."

"You won't fight, eh?" said Marcellus, his eyes widening with wonder.

"I will fight," replied Sargent, "but I'll fight in the open."

"Godfrey!" cried the millionaire. "Isn't this in the open?"

Sargent laughed. "You know it isn't, sir," he said, as though his words were superfluous. "You know you've got no right to cut off Flavel's credit. If you want to fight him, why don't you fight him squarely, with low bids and good stuff? That's the way to fight and I'm with you on a fight like that, and may the best man win. But this other kind of trickery—why don't you be a man, Marcellus?"

Marcellus stared at him. In the first place, Sargent had never addressed him hitherto without the prefix Mister; in the second place, Sargent had never uttered such radical sentiments before. Marcellus reddened as though a steel gauntlet had actually cut him across the face. He arose from his chair and strode toward Sargent, looking him keenly in the eye.

"What the devil is the matter with you, Sargent?" he demanded. "You're not drunk—or sick?"

"Neither," said Sargent calmly.

"Crazy, then? said Marcellus.

Sargent smiled superciliously. "I am not even crazy, Mr. Marcellus," he said. "You will notice that when you remarked a quarter of an hour ago that I had just returned from Europe, I didn't contradict

you, neither did I confirm your statement. I didn't say that I had just come from Europe, although some weeks ago I started out for Europe. The fact is, Mr. Marcellus, I didn't leave the country. I have come back sound in mind and body, and sound in something else." He drew himself up to his full height. "I am a graduate of the Harvard School of Business Ethics. I have spent my summer there—"

"What the devil," queried Marcellus, "is the Harvard School of Business Ethics?"

Sargent smiled again, showing his white teeth. "You will agree with me, Mr. Marcellus," he proceeded, "that the latter day education has been wonderfully complete. You will not agree with me, however, that it has lacked, wofully lacked, one essential feature. Up to one year ago, Mr. Marcellus, you could get any kind of business training that you wanted almost anywhere —except training in one particular. Up to a year ago you could not be trained in business morals. I took the course. I am back. I am here and at your service."

"You're a blamed idiot!" said Marcellus.

"I am not an idiot," returned Sargent. "I am your confidential man and one of the best in the country, and you know it."

"Well, then, be a confidential man and not a fool!" exclaimed Marcellus. "Go to Newark and put your fingers on those banks—"

"Not on your life," said Sargent. "I can't, because I'm a graduate of the Harvard School of Business Ethics, and no graduate of the Harvard School of Business Ethics can do a thing like that."

"You'd better resign," remarked Marcellus grimly.

"No, I won't resign," said Sargent. "There is no reason why I should."

"You're fired then," cried Marcellus.

"What for?" asked Sargent.

"For insubordination," yelled Marcellus, "for disobeying orders—for disobeying me!"

Sargent smiled. "I have a written contract with you, Mr. Marcellus," he returned. He drew out a document and passed it over. "Look at it. Do you find anything there that requires me to conspire with you to commit a crime? You can't fire me so long as I am a faithful servant. Faithful servants don't join conspiracies. I will remain in your employ."

Marcellus, without looking at the paper, tore it into pieces and tossed it into the waste basket.

"It was only a copy," said Sargent; "the original is in my safe deposit box."

"You won't go to Newark, then?" growled Marcellus.

"I will not," said Sargent.

"Then go to the devil," returned the millionnaire. "I'll get somebody else."

He didn't want to get somebody else, however. He knew that Sargent was the man to do this trick. More than that, he believed that Sargent would do the trick in due course of time. He dismissed Sargent with a wave of his hand.

Sargent left the room. Marcellus made up his mind that it would be a good thing to wait for perhaps twenty-four hours before taking up the matter with his confidential man again. He touched a button. A boy in uniform entered the room. The boy approached the desk and spoke first.

"Mr. Fox is waiting in the ante-room to see you, sir," he said respectfully. "He's been waiting all the morning and he waited all day yesterday. He says it is very important. That is his message, sir."

"You tell Fox," said Marcellus, "that I am not in. Tell him that I have not been in for a week, that I am on a vacation and will not be back for another week."

The boy stood staring at Marcellus. He slowly shook his head.

"I can't do that, sir!" he exclaimed.

"You can't do what?" cried Marcellus.

"I can't give Mr. Fox your message, sir."

Marcellus, in his surprise, bantered words with the midget.

"Why not?" he retorted.

"Because you *are* in and because you are *not* on a vacation. I can't tell a lie to Mr. Fox."

"*You* can't tell a lie," said Marcellus. "Since when, I'd like to know, since when did you start in telling the truth, you young upstart?"

The boy pondered for a moment. "I don't know," he said, "just when it came over me, but I go to night school, sir, up

in the Bronx. They've got a new course there, a course in honesty. I took the course. It is one of the first principles of that course, sir, never to lie in business. It doesn't do anybody any good and it may do a lot of harm, sir." He leaned over the desk and exhibited a blue enameled button which adorned the lapel of his coat.

Marcellus glared at it. Upon it were four white letters, plainly readable.

"What's that?" demanded Marcellus.

"That's our badge," returned the youth proudly. "Every honest man wears that."

"You get out!" exclaimed Marcellus.

"Yes, sir," said the boy, "but I can't tell Mr. Fox that you're out, sir."

"*You* get out!" roared Marcellus, leaping from his chair.

The boy got out.

For three minutes Marcellus, in a tearing rage, paced up and down his room. He was interrupted by a knock on his door.

"Come in," he roared.

A man entered. Marcellus was glad to see him.

"Hello, Barnaby," he cried. "Glad to see you. Sit down. Have a cigar."

The newcomer was a brawny individual, but well groomed and prosperous in appearance. He had a square jaw. He was the superintendent of the meadow plant of Structural Iron and Steel. He sat down and lit a cigar.

"I thought, Mr. Marcellus," he said seriously, "that I'd come over and tell you that, in my opinion, there's no money in that Tri-State tube."

"Money," grunted Marcellus. "Why, you and I figured three million in it just the other day, clean profit, too."

Barnaby shook his head. "We can't do it," he said, "if we follow specifications—"

"Who the devil said that we were going to follow specifications," retorted Marcellus. "I never followed specifications in my life; neither did you."

"I'm afraid we've got to in this case," said Barnaby. "The Tri-State have had a dozen men nosing about our plant and—"

"Lord," said Marcellus, "let 'em nose. Of course you've bought 'em up."

The superintendent changed color. "I—I—to tell the truth, Mr. Marcellus, I can't buy them up," he blurted out.

"Won't they stand for it?" queried Marcellus.

At this juncture they were interrupted. Another boy knocked and entered and laid some papers on the desk. And then a strange thing happened. The boy looked at Barnaby and Barnaby looked at the boy. Then each silently held up the right hand with the palm to the front. They glanced at each other meaningly and then the boy swung on his heel and disappeared.

Marcellus gasped. "Have *you* gone crazy?" he asked.

Barnaby shook his head. "Mr. Marcellus," he said, "I am an engineer and I was educated at the Columbia School of Mines, you know that. I have been taking a new course, late in the afternoons up there, a course in business morals. It has always been my policy to put into practice as an engineer what I learned when I studied engineering. Now I have studied business morals and I am bound by the teachings that they hand me. I can't bribe these Tri-State men."

"I'll do it myself then," blurted out Marcellus. "Godfrey, you chaps make me tired! You go back to the meadows, Barnaby and sober up, and then I'll talk to you."

As Barnaby left, Miss Magie entered. She was a stenographer. As she passed Barnaby she raised her right hand and he raised his. It seemed to be a sign of comradeship. Other than that, everything was as usual. She waited until Barnaby had closed the door behind him and then she swished her skirts to one side and sat down at the desk, pencil poised in air, ready for dictation.

"By George," said Marcellus, "I'm glad to see somebody that doesn't drink! That's the advantage of employing a woman. Now, we'll do some business."

"Yes, Mr. Marcellus," said Miss Magie.

"Miss Magie," went on Marcellus, "I want to dictate a letter to a Certain Person in New Jersey. I shall not sign this letter. You can have some one sign it for me. Hereafter it may become essential for all of us to swear that this letter was never

written and was never sent; in other words, to swear that it is a forgery written on our letter head. That letter goes. I shall dictate to you another letter to the same man, of which you will destroy the original and keep the carbon copy. Hereafter we may all of us be called upon to swear that the latter missive was actually written, actually signed and actually sent. The chances are, however, that nothing will happen in a thousand years—"

"Nothing can happen in a thousand years," said Miss Magie calmly, "because I shall decline to follow your instructions."

"*You!*" cried Marcellus.

The world seemed tottering on its base. Marcellus had always had a vague idea that Miss Magie would worship at his shrine until she died.

"Yes, Mr. Marcellus," went on Miss Magie, "I have turned over a new leaf. I have done a good many things for you that I ought not to have done—"

"And now," said Marcellus, "you're going to leave undone something that you ought to do, eh?"

"I belong to an association, Mr. Marcellus," returned Miss Magie. "I am a member of the Young Women's Christian Association. You may have heard of its new department of education— 'Straight Business.' Of course, none of us, after taking that course, can conduct any crooked business. If you want crooked things done, Mr. Marcellus—"

"I can get somebody else to do them, eh?" he grunted. "Well, I will then."

"No," she said calmly, "you can't get anybody else to do it. The Association will not permit anybody else to work for you, anybody who will do things like this. You must take us or go without. The Association is too big, Mr. Marcellus. In five years it will overwhelm New York."

"What is it?" demanded Marcellus, puzzled and aghast, "a new religion?"

Miss Magie regarded him gravely through her glasses. "I don't know that you would call it that, sir," she said. "The idea seems to be to improve business, that's all. Of course," she went on, "we are not mercenary at all, but we all have good sense. I am paid a salary, Mr. Marcellus, while you make a huge profit. Why should I do a bit of dirty work for you that makes you a half a million dollars when I don't reap the benefit?"

"Oho," said Marcellus, "then you want a bonus, eh?"

"Not at all," returned Miss Magie firmly. "None of us are asking to be bought and none of us are asking to be paid more than we are worth. But I put it to you, Mr. Marcellus. Why should we all sell our souls as we have been doing for some years and get no reward either in this world or the next. You demand results. We do the dirty work. You reap the benefit. We have been immoral and unmoral for years for a mere pittance. It doesn't pay and so we have stopped. That's all. If you want dirty work done, do it yourself."

"Good Lord," yelled Marcellus, "will nobody serve me? Send for Sargent."

He had forgotten for the moment that Sargent was the man who had started the ball rolling. He did not recall it until he saw Sargent give Miss Magie the high sign as he passed her. But it was too late. Sargent advanced to the desk and took a chair. He held a piece of paper in his hand.

"Mr. Marcellus," he said, in his usual business-like tones, "I have gone all over this Flavel thing and I have doped it out. Just look at these figures that I've sketched out here.

Marcellus did so. He was glad to fasten his mind upon something that he understood.

"Now as I understand it," went on Sargent, "that will satisfy you."

"Exactly," went on Marcellus, "that is exactly what I want."

"Well," said Sargent, as though the problem were already solved, "suppose I get Flavel to agree to this?"

"Why, you'll never get him to agree in the world. We've got to force that scoundrel to his knees."

"Suppose I talk compromise to him," suggested Sargent.

"You infernal idiot," yelled Marcellus, "the way to talk compromise to Flavel is to fight."

"I don't think," went on Sargent smoothly, "that I shall talk to Flavel at all. I know Flavel's right hand man. Do you mind my using your wire for a minute?"

He got Flavel's office on the wire and got Flavel's right hand man.

"Hello, Ripley!" he exclaimed. And then he said in confidential tones:

"R. U. S. E. B. E?"

Some unheard answer came over the wire.

"I thought you were," said Sargent. "Say, Ripley, I want to talk business to you. Where will you meet me? I want to settle this fight that is on between Flavel and Marcellus, and I want it settled right away. All right, in half an hour."

He hung up the receiver.

"What the devil do you mean by telling him that we want to settle?" demanded Marcellus.

"Direction, sir, rather than indirection," returned Sargent, "is one of the first principles of the Harvard School of Business Ethics."

"To the devil with the Harvard School of Business Ethics!" said Marcellus. "And what in thunder do you mean by 'R. U. S. E. B. E?'"

Sargent exhibited his button with the same pride that the youthful lacky had done half an hour before.

"I merely said to Ripley," he returned, "to make sure—'Are you a member of the Society for the Eradication of Business Evil?' And Ripley was, and I am to meet him right away to settle up this thing. I will report in just an hour."

It was an hour to the minute when he re-entered the room, jauntily and with triumph written upon his countenance.

"I've settled it!" he exclaimed.

"On what terms?" said Marcellus.

"On your terms," returned Sargent, "and they happen to be Flavel's terms as well."

"By Godfrey—" began Marcellus.

SARGENT was standing over him, smiling, with one hand on his shoulder when Marcellus awoke. Marcellus rubbed his eyes.

"Well," he said, "I congratulate you. S. E. B. E. can turn a trick. Good work, Sargent, that settlement—"

"What are you talking about?" demanded Sargent, staring at Marcellus in amazement. "What is S. E. B. E.?"

"Don't you know?" demanded Marcellus. "Why where's your button, man?"

Sargent stooped down. "Let me feel your pulse," he said. "Why, you're all right!" he finally exclaimed, in a tone of relief. "You've been asleep—nightmare, I suppose."

"Where have you been?" demanded Marcellus.

"I," said Sargent. "I've been down in the vault for just ten minutes, looking up the Flavel correspondence. Here it is."

"Ten minutes!" gasped Marcellus.

"Yes," said Sargent. "Don't you remember? I was going to tell you about Vienna and you said—"

"Have you been to Vienna?" demanded Marcellus. He rubbed his eyes again.

"You'll do," said Sargent. "You're wide awake now, Chief. Now we'll start in on Flavel's hide—"

"You go to the devil with Flavel's hide. Get me Flavel on the wire."

They got Flavel on the wire and Marcellus seized the transmitter.

"Hello, Jack Flavel!" he exclaimed. "Say, I got a bone to pick with you. Meet me at the Downtown Club in half an hour."

In half an hour Jack Flavel met him at the Downtown Club. Jack Flavel did more; he met Marcellus half way on a proposition that satisfied them both. Three hours later they rose and shook hands.

"Darn funny thing," said Marcellus. "It occured to me that we might get together, it occured to me in an almighty funny way. You know Bishop William Wilkinson, of Wall Street—"

Flavel started. "What about him?" he demanded.

"Why," said Marcellus, "I listened to him about ten minutes to-day, and I went in my office and I doped this thing out fair and square."

"What time were you listening to him?" asked Flavel, interested.

"Oh, about a quarter past one," returned Marcellus.

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# IN HIS BOOTS

By HAPSBURG LIEBE

*A gentleman on an egg and milk diet becomes a bandit, just to make the remaining six months of his life interesting. He's a bad man with good intentions, a bonded road agent, an unofficial tax collector with public opinion on his side—for a time.*

S soon as I saw young Caperton, I was sorry for him. I ran a so-called hotel down at Lopez then, and I had gone out to meet the daily westbound train, as usual. Caperton stepped from the rear car and immediately began to size up the stony, mesquite-covered hills that hedged in our town. He put his suitcase down on the sand, and looked again at the hot hills. Then he leaned against the little station's platform and stared at the hills once more.

He was slender and pale and blue-eyed, and there was a flush to his thin cheeks that I knew and didn't like. It was the lonesomeness, the forlornness, about him that made me sorry for him. I knew; oh, yes, I knew. I'd seen more than one of them come to Lopez for a little while.

Lopez never was much of a place. It is a scattered town, and once it achieved some fame as a gold camp. At the time of Caperton's arrival, it was a cattlemen's shipping-point. Besides the sunburned dwelling houses, there were a few stores, the hotel that I ran, and a sheriff's office; also there was a saloon and a decadent dance hall. A creek, which is lined with cotton-woods, runs through the basin that holds Lopez.

When the westbound had disappeared between two of the hot hills, Caperton turned to me and smiled faintly. It was then that I noticed he was well dressed.

"Can you tell me, Uncle," he said in a weary, down-South drawl, "where I can find a place to get regular meals?"

"I've got it, son," I told him. "You'll sleep in the open, in a tent, of course? The rest of them did."

"That's me," he agreed. "It's in with the rest of my luggage. If you don't mind carrying my suitcase—"

He said it as though he had been accustomed to servants, and he really had been. I picked up his suitcase, which was heavy even for me, and we went toward the weatherbeaten house wherein I held out to various cowmen, desert miners, drummers, and other folk.

There was but one nickname for him, and I gave him that. It was Kid. You see, he wasn't more than twenty-two. He staked his tent under a big cottonwood which stood not far from the half-dry creek, and then he rested and set out to make the acquaintance of the town. Every person who met him liked him at sight. Even the few greasers who lived in Lopez liked Caperton. He had a true-blue, gentlemanly way with him that took hold of a fellow at once.

There was, however, an underlying sadness in his manner, in spite of all his friendliness. He had come west, not to save his life, but to prolong it for perhaps a year; he was lifting up no false hopes to himself. It was hard, for he was a man who hated to die.

When he had been in Lopez for some eight weeks, during which time he had more mail than half the rest of the town put together—every day there was a letter in a dainty, girlish handwriting, the postmaster whispered to me—he came into my restaurant, looking all in. It was at noontime. He dropped into a chair at one of the tables, and I went to get his order.

"Don't want anything, I guess, unless it's a glass of milk," he mumbled. Then he straightway confessed: "Uncle Bill,"—he always called me that—"I'm playing in hard luck. I feel that I can confide in you,

Uncle Bill. So listen: I'm going to be an outlaw, live like a prince while I do live, and die in my boots when I die. It's so much better than lying there in my tent, a beggar at the door of death."

For a full minute I didn't say anything. I didn't know just what I ought to say. I'm old enough to think before I talk about serious things with fellows like Kid Caperton.

When I did speak, this is what I said: "Anything wrong at home, son?"

"Yes; there's a whole lot wrong at home," he answered readily. "Father and Mother have finished losing the plantation, and it's all they can do to support themselves—let alone sending money out here to me! They wouldn't tell me, but a letter from a friend told me all about it. I've just written them that I had an easy job out here, and that I'd be able to take care of myself from now on. They'll know the truth when some sheriff pots me, but then they'll love me a little harder than they ever loved me before. They'll miss me, naturally, Uncle Bill; but they're both old, and it won't be long—it won't be long—"

He got up and walked to one of the windows, and stood facing the hills. It was because he was ashamed to have me see his eyes that he did it. I'm old, and I'm a little soft and foolish.

Just then the westbound blew for Lopez, and the Kid went straight to the post office. I hurried out to meet the train.

Ten minutes later, he was back to have his glass of milk, and before he touched it he opened and read a letter that had four cents postage on it and two faded Cape jessamines in it. It was from the girl, and I saw his blue eyes as he went through it. When he had finished, he took from his pocket a little photograph in a silver frame, which he looked at hungrily.

I pushed the glass of milk across the table to him. "Your eggs will be here shortly," I said, "just as soon as Pepe can get back from the store with them and cook them. They're not going to cost you anything, Kid."

While I was talking, I was looking sidewise at the picture he held in his hand, and may I drop right here in my tracks if she wasn't a little beauty. And written underneath the face was this—

"While life is in me, I'm yours, Arnold."

"Not going to cost me anything!" exploded the Kid. His voice lowered itself and became steely polite: "Uncle, I thought you knew me better than that. I am a gentleman from Alabama; I am no beggar, sir."

"Of course! Of course!" I hastened to say. "But—I say, Kid! Let me lend you some money; eh?"

"I could never pay it back," he smiled. "And gentlemen from Alabama do not borrow money that they can never pay back."

Pepe entered with a paper bag in his hand. "Soft-boil half a dozen!" I bawled at the little Mexican. Then I sat down.

"See here," said I, "Kid, you're seriously considering this dime-novel, outlaw stunt, are you?"

He looked at me gamely. "Sure as green apples make little stomachs hurt, I am. I've already got the gun. It's a dandy, too. It's a Colts' .38, Army model; and I'm a good, and quick shot. I've been practicing, and I can hit a little dinner plate every crack at thirty feet." He was perfectly serious about it! "But listen," he went on. "I won't hurt anybody with it. All I'm after is to live like a prince while I live, and die in my boots when I die. I'm trusting you not to tell anything, Uncle Bill; understand?"

"Tell—me?" I exclaimed in a way that made him think I felt hurt. "You ought to know I wouldn't, Kid."

Shortly afterward, Pepe brought the soft-boiled eggs. Caperton ate four of them, would pay for all of them, read his latest letter through once more and went to his tent under the big cottonwood.

Already I had worked out in my mind just what I was going to do. I sent word to Sheriff Jim Anson that I wanted to see him, and he came within the hour. I poured the whole story into his ears. You see, Jim Anson had come to the west years before, for the same reason that Kid Caperton had come, but with better chances, and he loved Caperton like a brother. I knew no harm would ever come to the Kid

through Sheriff Anson; he would have broken his oath of office for the Kid's sake. He was as white a man as ever wore a star over his heart, and he certainly was the law's high light there in Lopez County.

When I had finished, Jim strained out a little laugh; then he scratched his stubby chin thoughtfully.

"There ain't but one thing to do, Bill," he said, "and that one thing is this: Everybody must carry a little money with him, and everybody must let the Kid hold him up. I'll ride the county straight off and put everybody wise. I'm sure that all will agree with me that my plan is all to the mustard, because there's nobody that don't like Kid Caperton."

"That's the very thing," I said, "that I was going to suggest to you. The little rascal, you can't give him anything; to let him hold us up and take it from us at the point of an honest blue gun is the only thing we can do. While you're riding the county, Jim, I'll find time to stretch the plan across all of Lopez. And don't fail to get all that Crossed L cow outfit to agree with you, because some of the fellows in that bunch can drive six bullets into the same hole at thirty yards."

"I get you, Bill," nodded Jim.

He filled and lighted his pipe hurriedly, and not long afterward he was pounding saddle-leather on a round of the county's cow outfits. That evening I found time to put all of Lopez wise to the little game. I promised to make good anything the greasers lost; and I furthermore promised the greasers a mess of lead if they cheeped an improper word to Kid Caperton.

On the following day, the Kid moved his tent to some hidden fastness in the hills, and then he came back to write two letters. He told the girl the plain, unvarnished truth; he told his parents that his little job would keep him largely away from the post offices, and that on that account they must not expect to hear from him often.

And on the day following that, the foreman of the Crossed L outfit lost his horse and five dollars in cash to the new "outlaw," and Kid Caperton rode for the hills with a blue bandana mask over his lean face, in a good old-fashioned way. The Crossed L foreman was somewhat disgruntled over losing his mount; he hastened a-foot into Lopez and to the office of Sheriff Anson. Anson was there.

"I agreed to lose a little money, but I didn't agree to lose my hoss!" he blustered. "Look here, Jim, I got to have pay for that hoss, or I'll make trouble. What're you goin' to do about it, Jim? You're in some blamed ticklish place; did you know it?"

Anson leaned back in his chair and lighted his pipe before he said anything.

"Well," he said in his Tennessee drawl, "not so very, I reckon. I gen'ally runs things in this here county, and I runs 'em to suit myself; but the way I runs 'em gen'ally pans out all right. Kid Caperton's a gentleman, Tom. He wouldn't steal a hoss; it went ag'in his grain; don't y'see? So he took it in a hold-up, like the gentleman he is. You talk about me arrestin' a man like him, Tom, and dang me if I don't take a shot at you; and when I shoots I gen'ally hits my mark. I would here suggest that you name a reasonable figger for half o' the wo'th o' that hoss, Tom. I am willin' to stand you half o' the loss o' the roan."

Tom did name a reasonable figure; he named a figure so reasonable that Jim Anson gave him five dollars over. Then he pocketed the money, shook hands with the sheriff, and walked out.

For some weeks the Kid played the outlaw game to his heart's content, and fared sumptuously. Then he raised the bet, so to speak.

He found out when the Crossed L was expecting a package of cattle-money by express, and he set himself to watch the trail. Foreman Tom Nunley had been sent to Lopez for it, and the Kid held him up.

"Drop it!" ordered Caperton.

Nunley's horse jerked itself up to a halt as the slender, masked man stepped to the centre of the road before it. Nunley's hand fell to the butt of his revolver. Caperton's weapon spat out a puff of smoke, a sharp report, and a bullet—and the bullet passed through the rim of Nunley's broad hat; you see, Caperton had made himself an expert marksman.

"Drop it!" clipped the Kid. "I mean it! Get me? *Drop it!*"

Tom Nunley went pale. He dropped the heavy package, and it fell to the stones with a clink.

"Look here, Kid," began Nunley, "did you know that this here county—"

"Cut it!" snapped Caperton, and another bullet hole appeared in Nunley's hat rim. "Cut it, and move on quick! The next shot I fire—well, are you going to move on, or not?"

Nunley rode on.

From that minute Kid Caperton grew bolder; he began to believe himself an invincible outlaw. The Crossed L's owner appealed to Jim Anson, and nothing came of it; he then appealed to the Governor of the State, and a reward was promptly offered for the arrest of Kid Caperton. But the Kid was only pleased by that. After a fashion, he had won his spurs. Something red had crept into his blood, something red and wild.

Two weeks later, he robbed the Bar-Bar Ranch of one of its big monthly payrolls, and one month from that day he took a package of cattle-money from the owner of the Inverted-K outfit.

All of this big money he hid, unopened, in the hills.

The owners of these three great ranches had cowmen out looking for the Kid, and it was only a question of time until some of them would get him. Matters had taken a really serious turn.

Just after nightfall of one evening, I stepped over to Jim Anson's home to talk the thing over with him. Jim took me into his best room, and there we sat down and lighted our pipes. It was Jim who mentioned the subject first.

"I think you and me, Bill," he drawled, "had better ride out and find the Kid, and have a talk with him. He'll have to give that money back, Bill; the's nothin' else to it."

"Yes, he'll have to give it back; you're dead right about it," I replied.

As I finished speaking, I saw that Sheriff Anson was staring straight at an open window across the room from where we sat. I turned my head and looked, and there at the window I saw the thin and smiling, bronzed face of the little bandit, Kid Caperton!

"Let me take care of the money, Jim," said he. "Don't worry yourself about the money. You've got a surprise coming, Jim."

Anson's countenance was like that of a sphynx. "What did you come in for, son?" he asked.

"I came in to ask a favor," said Caperton, very readily. "They'll get me sooner or later, of course; and, also of course, they'll bring me here when they get me. I want to ask you two fellows to dress me for burial.... Well, what about it?"

Jim Anson promised and so did I. For a moment there was a heavy silence over the room. Then the Kid thrust his sunburned right hand in at the window.

"Good-bye, Uncle Bill," he said. "And good-bye, Jim. I may not see you any more."

We rose and went to him, and shook his hand. "Seems to me, Kid," mumbled Anson, "you look better than you looked when you took on that outlaw stunt. Don't you feel better?"

"Feel better!" laughed Caperton. "Sure, I m better. Once I got the law against me good and hard, I began to get well! But I've already cast the die, and I've got to live up to it. I've got to die in my boots; don't you see?"

Fate the trickster! I, too, saw that he looked better. He was still thin, but he seemed as hard as iron, and there was no hectic flush to his cheeks.

"I can expand five inches easily, and I haven't seen the color of blood for six weeks," Caperton continued. "It was the high hills that did it. And now—*adios!*"

He disappeared in the thick darkness. Jim and I called, but he was gone.

I looked at Anson, and Anson looked at me. "Under the circumstances, I believe the Gov'nor would pardon him," said Jim, "if he returned the money and surrendered. I'll ride out and find him to-morrow, and talk it over with him. Almost the whole county would sign a petition for his pardon."

"I'll go out with you," said I. "Maybe

I can help you argue the case. You see, Jim, he's a hard one when his head is set as it is now."

On the following day we rode into the hot hills to look for the Kid, and we failed to find him. Just at dusk we came back to Lopez, tired and hungry, and we went straight to my eating-house for supper.

Jim and I had not been out of the saddle for ten minutes when a Bar-Bar cowman rode into Lopez with news to the effect that the Crossed L outfit had run Caperton down and killed him, and were even then on their way to the sheriff with the body.

"They holed him on the side o' Dogface Hill," said the Bar-Bar man. "He stood 'em off for two hours, and then one of 'em shot him straight through the head. He fell and rolled fifty feet down the side o' the hill. It's funny how close to 'em he shot without hittin' anybody! There ain't a man in the bunch but what's got a bullet-hole in his hat."

Jim Anson put down his knife and fork and bent his head.

"In his boots," he said aloud, to himself. "In his boots. God rest his ashes. He went out like a man."

Into my mind's eye there flashed a picture of an appropriate tombstone for poor Kid Caperton. It bore this across the top:

A GENTLEMAN FROM ALABAMA

And under it was this:

HE DIED IN HIS BOOTS

Shortly afterward, the Crossed L cavalcade arrived to deliver the body to the sheriff. I had them carry it into the best bedroom in my so-called hotel, and put it down on the bed. Then Jim and I straightway began to undress the slender little body to prepare it for burial, in keeping with our promise.

Anson was in the act of removing the dusty, blood-stained blue shirt when he ran on one of those old fashioned pocket-belts, next to the skin. He took it off and looked into it, and there he found a crumpled and sweat-stained message addressed to him and to me—which explained the Kid's reason for wishing Jim and me to dress him for burial. The note was short. It told us where to find the Crossed L money, and the Bar-Bar money, and the Inverted-K money. With each of the three packages, the message said, was enough gold nuggets to more than pay the interest on "the loan." Then he told us where he had picked up the nuggets—and the same is now the famous Kid Caperton gold mine.

"If only we had found him before the Crossed L boys got him!" moaned Jim Anson.

I turned back to the corpse. It put a hand to its wounded temple, and its blue eyes opened.

"Where am I?" it said.

Yes, the bullet glanced. The next day Caperton was on his feet. The trial came off two weeks after that, and the Governor, maybe somewhat influenced by a certain young woman from the South, allowed Caperton to serve only a few days of his sentence. Then the Kid's father and mother came West, and he married the girl, and they are by far the happiest and the richest people of Lopez now.

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IN the July number: ON THE SQUARE *by Howard Philip Rhoades.* It is a story of the "Hobohemians" of Greenwich Village, who subsist on "free verse, free love, and free lunch." The most picturesque character is a Russian Count—from Snyder's Creek, Indiana.

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# THE DAGGER

By CARROLL K. MICHENER

*A dealer in curios has a jeweled dagger reputed to have been Exhibit A in many murders. Because he fears that it might figure in further tragedies he refuses to part with it. But one night a curio collector comes through the window.*

OLD Whipple sat gazing at the jeweled dagger whose possessor, so the Hindu fakir had said, certainly would kill a woman because of jealousy. Though he was not sure that he believed the Hindu, he was capable of it; for he was simple-minded, if you listened to some of his neighbors, or a man of much occult knowledge, if you accepted the estimate of those who were more sympathetically disposed. His condition of mind long had been a subject for debate.

Perched insecurely on the top of a tall cabinet in the little office at the rear of his curio shop, the Rookery, where he sat toying with the dagger, was a bronze Buddha. Occasionally he lifted his eyes from the dagger to the malignant features of this image, and as often as he did so he was seized anew with an odd impression, one that had been growing upon him stealthily for a long time. It seemed to him that there was some sort of diabolical kinship between the leering image and the cunning instrument of death that lay under his hands. This impression was not very clearly defined. He did not attempt to define it, for he never had been able to achieve any great satisfaction in analyzing his fancies. They were too elusive and incommensurate. Nevertheless, this imagined relationship between the Buddha and the dagger was as real to him as their physical entities.

Old Whipple turned the dagger over and over, examining it minutely for the thousandth time. It was an unusual weapon. Everything about it was unusual. It was of extraordinary length, and of a metal that seemed finer and stronger than steel. Perhaps this effect of quality was due to the peculiar luster of the blade, which was more like the luster of bronze than of steel. The blade was without edges; or rather, its edges were smoothly rounded. Its only cutting surface was the point, and that was of a distressing sharpness. In shape, too, the blade presented a certain wicked attractiveness. It tapered from the handle in a gracefully irregular manner to the vengeful point, as if in sleek consciousness of its craft-beauty. The handle was of a wood so hard as to give it the quality of metal, and of a kind that defied naming. The upper and lower ends of the handle were ringed by bronze circlets set with small diamonds. It might have been Florentine, but it might as well have been from the Orient so far as there was any definite indication about it.

The mournful tinkle of the hidden bell that announced his customers interrupted Old Whipple's scrutiny of the dagger. He shuffled out through the cluttered stock of antiques, frowning in an effort to make his watery old eyes report the nature of business that was at hand.

It was not often that he was disturbed. Customers were rare, and for two or three days the bell had been as silent as the sepulchral curios. The Rookery was in a narrow street, lost among tumble-down wooden houses in the older quarter of the city, and there were few aside from the immediate neighbors who knew of it. Those of the neighbors who gave the matter any thought—and they were not many—found difficulty in understanding how Old Whipple managed to make a living. They concluded that what few customers he had must be rich folk; and doubtless this was true, for it was observed

that most of them came in limousines, or stepped warily into the murky street from a more pretentious neighboring thoroughfare, forefending ther way with walking sticks held elegantly in well-gloved hands.

It was an expedition such as one of these that now brought the young lawyer, Holloway, and the woman he expected to make his bride. Even Old Whipple's watery eyes were not deceived as to this very apparent intention. With the couple was Holloway's younger brother, the amiable Jim, who caused Old Whipple some anxiety with his blustering about amid the dust and gloom of the shop, looking for the rare something-or-other that remains nebulous to the curio hunter until he finds it. It seemed quite likely to Old Whipple that this potent young man would break something.

After half an hour of rumaging, the trio drifted into old Whipple's office. Holloway's fiancée had caught sight of the green Buddha, and for a long time she stood staring into its malignant countenance. She seemed fascinated.

"What a horror it is!" she exclaimed to Holloway, shrinking against him with something more than mock timidity.

"It's no great beauty, that's true," Holloway admitted. "Still, it rather strikes my fancy. I was just going to suggest that it might not be a bad thing for the new house, that little oriental alcove, you know, where you've put the wooden temple gongs."

"No, oh no!.... Don't you see, Hugh? That's jealousy in the image's face—jealousy, unreasoning, cruel."

"What an imaginative puss you are!"

"Maybe. But it's true... If you're going to buy that—" A strange tremor ran through her, and with an excited laugh she picked up the jeweled dagger from its case on Old Whipple's table. "If you do, I'll have to buy this, too. You see, it's the companion piece: jealousy, and then the dagger."

"You *are* an imaginative puss," commented Holloway, taking the dagger from her curiously tight clasp and handing it to Old Whipple, who seized it with a surprising eagerness.

"I couldn't sell it—I couldn't part with it," chattered the old man. "It has no price."

Jim, who had been looking at a small collection of scarabs, and grunting uncomplimentary doubts of their genuineness, came up and joined the tableau. He whistled slowly as he looked from one to the other.

"What's the matter with you people?" he asked. "You look like the third act in a melodrama. Come on out of this. There's nothing here we want."

Holloway stood for a moment looking curiously at the dagger. He fancied he sensed in himself a reflection of the old man's agitation. Perhaps because of the attractive oddity of the knife he had a desire to touch it, to run his fingers along its smooth blade. He was struck, too, with his fiancée's reference to jealousy, and by the coincidence of having experienced the same extraordinary feeling himself. It was a feeling of which he had said nothing—a sensation for him unexpected, startling, and none the less unmistakable because it was new.

But Holloway was a person who dealt more with facts than with fancies, and he would not permit this fancy to concern him more than momentarily. He laughed at the serious preoccupation of his fiancée as he led her away.

Old Whipple followed them through the shop, holding the dagger carefully in both hands. He kept his eyes fixed, mournfully, on Holloway and the girl, watching them enter the car. He was still visible as they drove off, standing like a gray shade in the midst of his antiques.

Holloway directed Jim, who was driving, to drop him at the city hall.

"Oh, Hugh!" pouted the girl. "You promised to take me to tea."

"But, my dear—business, you know. Maybe I can slip away in time to join you. Jim can take you wherever you like. Only don't wait for me. Maybe I'll come and maybe I can't."

An unusual expression came into the girl's eyes.

"I should think you'd be jealous of Jim—some men would," she said, hurriedly,

feeling at the same time that it was something that might as well have remained unsaid.

But Hugh Holloway only laughed and squeezed the gloved hand that had wandered into his, safely hidden in the deep tonneau of the car from the prying eyes of pedestrians.

Old Whipple stood for a long time after his customers had gone, looking through the unwashed front windows of the Rookery, still holding the dagger in his hands. Then he shuffled back to the office and replaced it in its case. He hovered over it, feebly resisting an impulse to lose himself again in gazing upon it in fanciful absorption. He sank into his chair again, and heaving a great sigh, let his eyes fix themselves upon the weapon with such an attention as to suggest the absorption of a crystal gazer.

Advancing twilight began to obscure the grotesque objects in his shop, bringing even a more profound obscurity to the room where he sat. Still he continued to gaze at the dagger as if he really could see it, or as if it had a luminous quality capable of defying the darkness.

To the neighbors such behavior as this on the part of Old Whipple would not have been surprising. They knew things about him that were perhaps more eccentric than this. Anything might be believed of a man who was reputed to be everything from a black magician to a person who spoke with ghosts. The estimates of the neighbors were formed, of course, not on careful investigation so much as on hearsay; and this source of information was largely the children, who used to bring home strange tales of his behavior until apprehensive parents forbade them to go to the Rookery any more.

It came to be said that it was a whim with him to weave an imaginary story around every article in his shop, and that he spent a good deal of his time writing these stories down when he might better have been about his business. It was rumored, too, that a great professor from the university had come there occasionally to hear the stories, and to be amused, doubtless, at the fancies the old man would bring up concerning some ancient relic from the university museum.

Then, too, a newspaper once had written up Old Whipple as the strange man who professed to be able to take the alabaster rouge cup of the Egyptian princess who lived so many thousands of years ago as to be very much forgotten, and vision in it not only her long obliterated face and figure, but also the events of her entire life from the day of birth to the day of death.

Of course these things had made the old man much laughed at. He had in time come to be ashamed, and would talk no more of his fancies. The children brought home no more tales, and even the professor ceased to come on his visits to the Rookery.

Old Whipple often sat as he was now, looking intently at the dagger. Unquestionably he was engaged in one of those mental excursions which the neighbors explained so variously, and which he never attempted to explain at all. His vein-swollen, scaly hands clasped the edge of the table top with too much vigor for his age. There was something almost gnomish in the stooped posture of his body. His neck was craned forward in what must have been an aching position, and his short gray beard hung almost to the surface of the table.

But these physical conditions were of no concern to Old Whipple now. Physically he was unconscious of himself or his surroundings. He seemed to be merely the disembodied essence of his five senses, with perhaps a sixth sense, or a seventh, thrown in. To feel that the room in which he sat no longer existed gave him a strange exaltation. The room was not there—he was not within it. The Rookery was gone, with all its relics. The green Buddha was gone. Even the dagger upon which his eyes were fixed—and this was the strangest thing of all—was there and yet not there, for it took the form of a vision of people and places in which he himself was incorporated.

The vision was of old times. Strange folk peopled it. If Old Whipple had been a historian or an ethnologist he might

have identified them by their clothing and the manner of their speech, but this was of no concern to him. He understood their words perfectly, although to his waking ear he was certain their speech would be unintelligible.

He lived, as time is measured, a dozen years among these people, coming at last to the day when his young son, blinded with the passion of a sudden jealousy, seized a jeweled dagger and flashed it to the heart of his bride. Out of the eternity of agony that followed, Old Whipple emerged clasping the dagger, dripping with its woman's blood, and staggered away with it to a room, to a table, in front of a rickety cabinet from the top of which leered a grinning, green Buddha. His eyes remained fixed on the dagger. All else was altered now, save the dagger alone. The strange folk were gone, the old time was vanished; he was sitting again in the little room at the back of his shop. He lifted one cramped hand from its fierce clasp on the table-edge, and ran a trembling finger over the blade of the dagger. The blood was gone. Only a stain of innocent corrosion marred the wicked polish of the metal.

Old Whipple sank back into the chair and anyone who had come upon him then would have been certain he was dead. But presently he started up and began fumbling for something in a drawer beneath the table. He pulled out a worn notebook, and grumbling feebly at the necessity, groped for a candle and matches. With a stub of pencil he wrote for a long time, sighing at his labor. When he had finished he read it over, evidently with satisfaction, and wrote at the top, "Vision of the Dagger, No. 6."

There was a strange pedigree written in the notebook. Old Whipple mused over it by the guttering light of the candle. He had begun writing on the day the dagger came into his possession. He put down first of all what was told him by the Hindu. The dagger was very old, said the Hindu, and had accomplished many deaths. It was possessed originally by a bad rajah who, through jealousy, killed his wife. After that whoever became possessed of the knife did likewise. If the owner had no jealousy he became jealous, and in the end killed a woman. So it would always be, said the Hindu, for so great was the psychic force of jealous hate that had concentrated itself through centuries in this instrument, it was certain that not only would its possessor commit a murder, but that whoever attempted to break the destined chain of killings should himself be slain.

Old Whipple, of course, had not taken all this too seriously. There were plenty of such lying fakirs to deal with in the curio trade. But it was not long after he had jotted down the legend in his notebook that he had the first of his bloody visions concerning the weapon. He had another and another, and rapidly his attention to the Hindu's legend grew from the casual to the profound. Always in these visions he saw a place of ancient times. He was transported to far countries of which he was almost wholly ignorant. And always there was a drama that ran its varied course from birth to young-life and love, then to jealousy and hatred, and in the inexorable end to the dagger and the killing of a woman.

Though Old Whipple lived so much in visions of old times woven about his antiques, and these visions were very real to him—more real, sometimes, than the bitter tenor of his physical life—he never was quite sure, in his waking moments or when he was out among the visible realities, that there was anything more in his visions than mere fancy, or at worst the nightmare of a decaying and disordered mind. Still he could not keep the subject out of his thoughts. If there was anything in the Hindu's story, why didn't he, Whipple, kill some one with the dagger? Was it simply that he had no woman to kill, and that his great age had put him beyond the capacity for such passion as jealousy? He was perplexed, too, as to what he ought to do with the dagger. Should he destroy it, and thus settle the matter forever? Sometimes he was of half a mind to do it, but he was stayed by the reflection that if he believed in the legend enough for that he must accept as truth the remainder of

it, and be prepared to forfeit his own life in penalty for breaking the chain of murder. Well' he was ready for that. He was an old man, and useless; he would find it no great sacrifice. If he could only be sure—

At least Old Whipple was so far convinced, that under no circumstances would he have parted with the dagger. He would have felt that to be a crime. When the young woman had suddenly picked up the weapon that afternoon he had been seized with a panic. His imagination leaped to a vision of the dagger piercing its way to her heart's blood in the hands of the young man who stood with her, jesting about the green Buddha. He must make up his mind, soon, he reflected, as he shuffled feebly through the dark shop to lock up for the night. Something must be done—before anything should happen.

It was perhaps only the appointed destiny of the dagger that it should have been stolen that night. The burglar took many things—among them the scarabs—but there was none Old Whipple mourned as he did the jeweled weapon. He was affrighted; he shrank from his thoughts. It seemed to him—though on no account, probably, would he have confessed this—that the psychic force embodied in the dagger was great enough even to prevent the dagger's destruction. The wilfulness, the awful, perpetrating purpose of this force, bore him down to the point where he was scarcely in doubt of his insanity.

Old Whipple began to look at the newspapers. A boy brought him one daily, and he would read in a dreadful agony until he had satisfied himself there had been no murder of a woman, with a jeweled dagger. He neglected his business to make exhausting rounds of the pawnshops, seeking for the stolen weapon. He begged the police to assist him in recovering it, and the police looked at him narrowly, writing his complaint in a book, and thinking no more about it.

Then one day the thing Old Whipple had been waiting for was chronicled on the first page of the newspaper. A woman had been stabbed to death. Her husband, a man who was known to the police, and who had once "done time" for burglary, was arrested, charged with the murder. It was said that jealousy was the cause of it. There had been a bartender rooming across the hall. The quarrel that resulted in the killing had concerned him, the police said, though the bartender proclaimed innocence. The paper gave considerable attention to the weapon, which had been plunged into the woman's heart and remained there when the police arrived. It was a dagger of strange design, with a jeweled hilt.

This news stabbed Old Whipple to the very soul. He felt that he, not the man who stole the weapon from him, was the murderer. He should have credited his clear visions. He should have destroyed the dagger when he had the opportunity. Now he must find it again.

So Old Whipple went to the police and pleaded with them. But they would not give up the dagger. They told him he was clearly out of his mind on the subject. Besides, they pointed out, the dagger must be present in court as an exhibit when the murderer was tried.

Old Whipple existed in a state of pitiful mental agony until the trial began. He was there in the court room from beginning to end of it. He even created a slight disturbance at one point, when the young prosecuting attorney, Hugh Holloway, rose before the jury to make his plea for a conviction, holding aloft the cruel dagger with its double crown of gems. Old Whipple had it in mind to plead for the prisoner, to say a word that would set things right. The man was guilty, of course, but he, too, was a victim; his legal murder by the hangman would be no less a murder by the dagger, which was the fiendish cause of all. He must try to make them understand, he must brave their ridicule. But when he tried to speak they silenced him—the rough bailiffs; and so that he might stay and hear all, he remained quiet.

But after the trial, even after the hanging, they would not let him have the dagger, these suspicious police. He brought money—all his hoard—but, though the sight of it moved them profoundly, they shook their heads. The dagger must be sold at

auction at the end of the year, according to the custom, and the money put in the fund for widows and orphans of policemen.

So Old Whipple had to content himself with living on among his visions and waiting for that time to arrive. He had to exert himself at his business so that he should not by any chance be lacking in funds when it came to the bidding. He must be ready to pay any price.

The day of the auction arrived, and he went in a palsied expectancy. He stood in the crowd of second-hand dealers, curio seekers, and morbid persons who for inscrutable reasons desired to possess weapons which had accomplished murderous death. One by one the knives, pistols, and revolvers were put up and carried away by the successful bidders. It was all over speedily, and the jeweled dagger had not been offered. As the ghoulish crowd of bidders dispersed, Old Whipple went with trembling anger on his lips to the police captain who had been auctioneer. The captain laughed at him.

"The dagger? What would that be doing at an auction sale? Too valuable, old Shylock. But I don't mind telling you what became of it. I saw the chief give it to Holloway, the prosecuting attorney. Why shouldn't the prosecutor preserve the evidence if he wants to? And look here, old man, don't you go making a fuss about it. You won't get anywhere, unless it's to jail."

So Old Whipple got along home to his curio shop, and then as restlessly set forth again, this time to the office of young Holloway. He made a strange spectacle there, pleading almost with tears, for the jeweled dagger. He was pathetic, too, in his feeble earnestness, and because of the small heap of coin he poured with trembling hands from a ragged wallet, abandoning it with an appealing gesture on Holloway's desk.

Holloway felt a stir of sympathy for the old man, but he was not moved to give up the dagger. It was at home, and he was not sure but that his wife had taken a fancy to it. No, he could not part with it.

Old Whipple did not give up. He went out to Holloway's residence, and asked to see the young Mrs. Holloway, whom he easily recognized as the woman who had picked up his dagger that day in the shop. But Mrs. Holloway would not sell the weapon, though he pleaded in such a manner as to arouse her pity. She could not sell a thing that belonged to her husband, she explained, without first consulting him.

As he left, Old Whipple caught a glimpse of the dagger, which lay gleaming dully on the library table. He was seized with an almost overwhelming impulse to grasp it and rush away with it. But he reflected that this would not do; even a child could catch him. He must leave that sort of thing to more certain hands.

So, his extremity inspiring him to unwonted craftiness, he sought out a certain individual from whom he had made occasional purchases of curios, concerning which he had been delicate enough not to ask too many questions. This person, under Old Whipple's direction, knocked that afternoon at the door of the Holloway residence. He was dressed in the uniform of a messenger, and handed Mrs. Holloway a telegram. There were charges to be paid, and she went into her room for her purse. When she returned, having discovered that the telegram was an unintelligible message from a person of whom she never had heard, Mrs. Holloway found the messenger in the library, near the table on which the dagger lay. She flushed with anger at the same moment that she was struck with the terrible thought that perhaps he was about to murder her. She felt, at least, that his aim had been to possess himself of the dagger, even though the motive was only theft. After he was gone, murmuring an excuse, and running all the way to the corner of the block, she thought of the possible connection between this event and the visit of Old Whipple.

Mrs. Holloway spoke of this to her husband when he returned home that evening, but he did not seem impressed. He was inclined to laugh at her for her fears.

Holloway, as usual of late, had dined uptown. He found his wife playing chess with the amiable Jim. He paused at the

library table, idly fingering the dagger, while he apologized for his tardiness. His wife looked up with a smile, but when she saw her husband toying with the weapon, turning it over and over to catch the sparkle of the gems, a frown submerged her smile and she spoke sharply, instead of sweetly as she had intended.

"I do wish you'd keep that horrid thing in your own room," she said. "Or, better still, give it back to Old Whipple."

"Of course," he responded. "I will if it disturbs you."

"Oh, I don't mind it," she qualified, illogically, "but you seem to have become more of a sweetheart to the dagger than to me since you've had it. You fairly worship it."

Holloway laughed at this. Then he went over and kissed the arch of his wife's neck as she turned her face coquettishly away from him.

"Jealous? Is that it? And of a thing so inanimate!"

"Come, come, you two," interposed the amiable Jim. "This promised to be a real game, with me a winner for once, until the happy-wedded-life incident began. Thought you people were through with that lovey-dovey stuff I put up with so patiently before you were married."

"Oh! Beg your pardon, Lord Jim," smiled Holloway, going back to the library table and picking up an evening paper.

But Holloway did not read. He sat looking, instead, at the dagger. It exasperated him, for he felt it was becoming an obsession.

Occasionally he looked up at his wife and Jim, their heads bent over the chess board and a flush of quiet excitement in their cheeks. He was conscious as he did so of a resurgence of that unwonted feeling—the sense of jealousy he had experienced as he had stood that day in the Rookery, in the presence of this curious blade and of the green Buddha leering down on them all. He mused over this in a puzzled, interested fashion, as he felt consciousness of his obsession developing within him. From a vague notion it was becoming a fixed state of mind.

Holloway began thinking subverted thoughts concerning his wife and his brother. He started, once, and almost cursed under his breath at such folly, such treason of thought, as a picture came up between him and the dagger... He saw himself sitting in his office, and Jim and his wife driving together in his car. He witnessed them stopping in a country lane to pick cherry blossoms, and standing together on a windblown hillock so close that wisps of her hair drifted across his cheeks. He saw Jim grow pale at a sudden emotion, and in a flash the vision was of his wife in Jim's arms, and Jim kissing her, passionately, and she yielding, returning his kisses....

This was such a vision as to bring Holloway upright in his chair, with an inarticulate sound in his throat.

"What, Hugh?" admonished his wife, without looking up. "Dozing again over your paper? You'd better go to bed. Then you won't snort like that when your head rolls over on your shoulder. Forgive me, dear, for laughing at you, but it *is* funny!"

Still Holloway remained in his chair looking at the dagger, reviewing swiftly all the events of his life as they touched the life of his bride. Mingled with the skein always was Jim, the useless, useful Jim.

Had he presumed too much upon woman's fidelity. This was a treasonous, poisoned thought, his reasoning self told him; yet it was in his mind, and he could not efface it. Coupled with this thought was another: Jim was in the house very often of late. He was not exactly a nuisance, because he was useful. He seemed to have no greater ambition than to manage a powerful motor car and to be agreeable to womankind. That was it: he was too agreeable. Moreover he was young, and a handsome rogue. His indolence made him an expensive chauffeur, yet he was an excellent one, and could be depended upon to take good and agreeable care of his brother's wife on those occasions when office work kept Holloway from household attendance. This had been the case even in pre-wedding days, when never a suspicion had entered Holloway's careless, confident mind concerning Jim.

Perhaps this was the trouble, the blame doubtless lay with Holloway himself. He left his wife too much alone. He ought to quit this accursed business of the law that so tyrannized over his time. Still, there was no reason for his wife to question his affection for her. The danger, after all, seemed to reside in the ever-present Jim. If it were not for him— But that would not excuse his wife, of course. If there were any guilt it was shared by them. In fact, she must be the chief offender from the very nature of things. Perhaps—but there were a thousand notions pressing upon him, a thousand suspicions, between his mind and the dagger gleaming with a dull fire in the softened electric light.

In spite of his efforts to seem natural he was cold to Jim when the chess game ended and Jim went home. He was strangely unresponsive even to his wife, who clung to him warmly, and questioningly, for a moment, as she, too, said good-night. He muttered something about a brief to go over, and remained in the library, seated at the table, turning over and over in his hands the cool-metalled weapon, and feeling curiously of its wicked point.

Holloway could not have explained, even if he had been able to recall clearly afterward, the processes of thought that led him at the end of two or three hours to turn down the lights in the library, and clutching the dagger, to go stealthily up the stairway toward his wife's room. He seemed to have one lucid moment after that—a moment full of revulsion and horror—as he stood at the head of the stairs and heard the point of the dagger scrape harshly against a metal railing. Then he opened the door of his wife's room and went in, tiptoeing toward the bed where she lay, the lines of her slim young body faintly traced among the covers by a dim light from the hallway. A passion and a demoniacal impulse stronger than mind, stronger than soul and body, filled his veins and lifted his clasped hand—the hand that held the dagger.

As soon as the lights had gone out in the library the man dressed in a messenger's uniform pried open the window, and whispering to Old Whipple to stay outside, put one leg over the sill and carefully drew the other after it. He came tumbling back almost instantly at sound of the fear-choked outcry of a woman's voice, a sound that spread a sudden, irresistible terror through the silent house.

"Let's get out of this," he muttered, and without waiting for the old man he made off into the shrubbery. But Old Whipple did not follow. He pulled himself painfully through the open window, and stumbled against the library furniture until he found a door leading into the hall. Instinctively he sought the stairway, and with gasping haste clattered up the steps and along the hall to the doorway of the room where Holloway stood, a-tremble, looking from the figure of his wife lying motionless across the bed, to the dagger that still was clutched tightly in his uplifted hand. Murmuring incoherently, the old man shuffled over to Holloway, took the dagger, and disappeared down the stairs as he had come.

After an indefinite period, during which Holloway swayed slowly back to consciousness, he went to the bed, and lifting his wife in his arms, kissed her lips, her cheeks, her hair. He pressed her to him with such violence that presently she sighed, opened her eyes, and murmured: "Oh, Hugh, what a nightmare! I dreamed you were going to kill me with the dagger."

The door of the Rookery was locked next morning when Holloway went there. He went again in the afternoon, taking with him a man who wore the badge of the police. Together they broke open the door, and went into the little room that served as Old Whipple's ofice. There they found his body, crouched in a wry heap. His head was crushed, apparently by the bronze Buddha that lay fallen at his side. It seemed that the great blow of an axe, aimed at the dagger—a blow that had broken the jeweled weapon in pieces, as well as the brick upon which it leaned—must have sent the feeble old man tottering against the cabinet, shaking down the grinning image from its insecure place at the top.

# MISS BETTY

By JUDITH GRAVES WALDO

*Jedediah names his ship after a girl he has heard but never seen. Just a voice out of the night. He doesn't even know her last name. One cannot trace a voice in the city directories or call up all the Bettys in the telephone books.*

HEN Jedediah was a baby, Lucia, his mother, used to wrap him away in the dried sea grass of the higher beaches while she worked at the torn nets and watched the blue strip of water beyond the Point for the sweep of a home-spread sail. Even when Caleb's boat had just cleared the harbor and her hands still twitched as she tried to weave the threads, her eyes would dream around the spot where she knew the masts would first loom above the dunes on Long Point. Maybe it was in those long waiting months that Jedediah's eyes began to look like his mother's, a misty revery about them, but seeing every dot that flecked the sea. And with the October's coming, when the cranberries were red drops in the brown bogs, Lucia would take him across the strip of land that held the sea from the little town, and while she gleaned the bogs he kept on the upper dunes where he could see the ships standing well out past the bars off Peaked Hills. And once as he watched there, glad, he did not know why, that the wind was strong over him, he saw a man in the high rigging of a ship, a small, dark, swaying thing against the taut white sails.

"Where are you?" Lucia cried out, starting suddenly. And when she turned about he pointed out to sea and laughed down to her:

"I'm in that riggin', reefin' the topsail!"

"You shan't! Never—never!" she cried to herself, as she bent to the gleaning again. But if your baby has slept in the dried sea grass and rolled among the nets and comes at last to watch, always, the ships go up and down and is glad when the wind flies strong, and does not know why, there is no use trying to hold him when his time comes. And Jedediah's time came soon enough, for when they came to tell Lucia that Caleb would never come back, she just said: "Yes, I know," and in a few weeks she died and left Jedediah to watch the ships alone. He went across the dunes, past the bogs where his mother had gleaned, and when he came to the sea his eyes saw nothing but a far white sail, no greater than his hand. He watched until it grew big, beating close inshore, and he could hear the scrape of the wind on her canvas.

"She's rigged outward bound, but she's making harbor," he said aloud. "She's coming for me!" And he turned to run all the way to the village to wait by the wharf until the boat came in. But when he asked to ship on her the captain of the whaler looked him over slowly with a careful noting of the lithe, boyish figure, and then a long stare into Jedediah's eyes.

"Can you keep your head and eyes by you?"

"Yes."

"Don't look it!"

"I can."

"Sign in, then. I put in here for another hand. One didn't show up at sailing. Didn't want a boy, but sign in." And Jedediah signed for a two years' cruise.

While the ship beat up the coast toward Davis Strait there was little work to do, and Jedediah could dream and grow solemn in the great new marvel of it all, and then laugh aloud because he was glad, and drag his bed up from below to lie under this new sky and take the swish of the sea and the purr of the wind on the sails into his sleep with him. But when they had entered the straits and the bay

was nearing, there was too serious work to be dreaming. There were the long cold days at the masthead that grew suddenly pulsing hot at sight of a spouting whale. Then the great swing of the boat's pull to meet it; the craft and cunning of stealth, and the stifled joy in the danger of fight and capture. Sea-life was a rapturous life to Jedediah, and not even the heavy work, the murk and slime of the hold, the sickening smell of the boiling blubber, or the aching winds of the northern floes could take away the spell of it all that made him glad—glad—he did not know why. And so when the ship swept out from the bay again, flying before the ice that already stiffened the waves off the headlands, Jedediah climbed into the foresail and said his farewell to Rowe's Welcome with a promise of return.

The ice had come early that year, or, maybe, the whales were shy, for the ship could not get her full cargo and ran down by the Azores to complete it, and made Amsterdam her market close to the ending of her first year. But Jedediah was afraid of that great strange thing at the end of the quays that was a city, where the sailors rioted at night, and the very children spoke a language he did not know, and he stayed by the ship when the work of the day was over, climbing the rigging to watch the lights that pricked the blackness into life, and to wonder about the people who drifted up and down the quays. And there he was even the last night before the ship dropped down the harbor on her return voyage. The mist was breathing in off the sea and Jedediah was thinking what queer faint trails the lights made in it, when, just below him on the quay, an English voice—a girl's, soft, supple, a little sob in it—laughed out, dimpling the mist. Jedediah gripped the rope with tingling fingers and crouched to listen, for she was saying something, but he could not hear, and those with her cried out: "Oh, Betty!" and she laughed again, and Jedediah's pulses throbbed. He did not know a voice could hold such sound. It was long after they had passed into the city that Jedediah swung down to stand on the quay just where the girl's laugh had rung up to him.

"Betty," he whispered to the lights of the harbor. "One day I shall have a ship of my own and her name shall be Betty.

"Betty," he said to the wind that was driving the mist away, "Betty."

But it was nearly fifteen years before Jedediah had a boat of his own—the youngest captain in the fleet then. She was a three-master, schooner rigged and painted black. And because just "Betty" seemed too bold for other men to speak, Jedediah called her "Miss Betty," and had the name done in gold—where all the others were in white—and knew for the first time that through the years he had thought of gold hair when he thought of the girl who had laughed on the quays at Amsterdam.

"Miss Betty's" first voyage was into the straits for Arctic whale, and Jedediah had not seen the headlands of Rowe's Welcome since his boyhood cruise. She was the last of the fleet to leave the bay that season, and with full cargo was running south again, well down the straits, when, in the lurid dawn, the man braced at the helm saw Jedediah slip from the rigging where he had climbed at midnight on some strange purpose of his own.

He came to stand by the helm, but did not speak for some moments, and when he did his voice was unsteady.

"Bring her—about!"

"What?" the man cried, and the helm slipped a point. They were running before the wind.

"Bring her about!" he said with steady voice. "We go back!"

But the man jammed the helm down and kept to the course, looking furtively about to see if any were near.

"I'm not daffy," said Jedediah, quietly, watching him, "but I've seen that thing that will take her back if she goes with me alone. Will you bring her about, or—" And cowed by Jedediah's eye, the man slowly shoved the helm over till the sails quivered and slacked and then jarred to the shock of the wind, head on, and the men were scrambling on deck with scared faces.

"Get to the ropes!" Jedediah yelled, and every man was in his place. And now she had to beat her way, and it was not until

she was rushing free on the backward course that Jedediah called the men to him. His face was white, drawn, stern with big purpose, but over his eyes was the mist of revery that was over Lucia's, and his voice was full:

"Straight above us—maybe nigh Rowe's Welcome—full two days' run—a wreck is pounding on the reefs."

"Who spoke us?" someone cried out.

"No one spoke us!" Jedediah flung wide his arms. "I heard the slatting of her sails an' saw her. Her riggin's strewn across decks—her masts are gone, and men are clinging in the ropes and sails, and the wind off the floes is hard over them!"

The men were huddled together white-lipped. Jedediah crossed to the foremast and turned.

"I'm not daffy, men; bear me out. If we don't find her in two days—three—give me three—the oil is yours, an' your wage—I'll sign it."

A man stirred and held up his hand to let it drop again.

It was no simple superstition of the sea. Every sailor knew that such things were, and they would not dicker for oil with the man who had been sent the revealing. The men crept back to their places, and "Miss Betty" rushed on into the north.

The days were short in the northern waters, and it was in the dimming light of the third noon that the far headlands of Rowe's Welcome showed off the port bow, and almost at the moment of sighting her, Jedediah's voice rang from the masthead. There were no words, just a great cry that cut the wind and brought the men clambering below him.

"Whar away?"

"Keep her off! She's broad on the lee bow," and the men swarmed up the ropes and then clung there agap, for across the sea that heaved and swung and dipped below them, lay a battered wreck, her masts gone, the rigging strewn across her decks and the pounding sea against her. But there was no sign of life over her, and Jedediah's orders came in a voice that lashed and bit them into quick action against the sullen weather. They kept off before the wind and then ran down close to the reefs, and the long boat put out with Jedediah and three men, though everyone had begged to go; and all the way he cautioned them what men became after days without water and food. But when they were close on her, and there was no answer to their shout, two of the men clambered up boldly by some trailing ropes, and then fell back and cried on God with horrid, distorted faces, and crouched by the gunwale, and Jedediah cursed them out of his way and stood up on the deck. And then he moved across it, without looking at what lay there, toward a tangle of sails and ropes, and the two men staring after him, saw a woman creep from the shelter of the sails and lift up her hands to him. She was gaunt with famine, but her eyes were clear and sane, and the great gold of her unbound hair was about her, and when she cried out to him with a little sob in her voice, Jedediah bent down and lifted her. "Betty," he said, "Betty."

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Last year publishers offered to turn over their profits to the government for the duration of the war. Congress preferred to adopt the postal zone system, not for the duration of the war, but indefinitely. This system will go into effect on July 1st. It will put a penalty on magazine reading that will eventually make it unprofitable for the majority of magazine publishers to do business. Taxing a business out of existence will not help to win the war.

# TO KEEP OUT THE FROST

By GEORGE L. CATTON

*"Stop, look, and listen" is the first and last rule of Big Ben's life; and when his rigid adherence to it causes him to turn back on the trail, his maneuver flashes a timely warning to the white man who is after his pelt.*

JIM HENDRY wormed his big body inch by inch along the narrow ledge across the face of the canyon wall to the shade of a fallen boulder. Then as silently as he came he stretched out at full length and slipped the barrel of his old muzzle-loader out over the palm of his left hand. Across the narrow canyon where the parallel divide-pass broke in, Big Ben, the largest silver-tip Jim had ever seen, had just one half minute longer to live. In thirty seconds more of his leisurely lumbering gait, Big Ben would reach the break and start down over that hundred yard gap of wide open trail. And then!

Jim glanced along the barrel of his rifle, lining up the sights. In thirty seconds that long coveted pelt—that pelt that he had schemed for months to obtain—would belong to him. It would take the place of many blankets on Wee Willie's crib in the cabin in the river valley when the frost came. Jim's finger found the trigger, curled across it.

But Big Ben's going was not yet.

Times beyond his memory in his fifteen years of life Big Ben had pitted the cunning of his species against the wits of his white and red-skinned human enemies. Yet always he had escaped. Twice he had found himself cornered; and twice in the berserk rage of his extremity and the hell of his wounds he had killed, his smashing fore-paws and three inch, curved-sabre claws eliminating forever that particular half-naked wielder of the tomahawk and knife. Yet always that law that guided and directed every glance of his keen little eyes—that relentless law of self-preservation—was screaming to his senses to beware the Menace!

Away there where the sun came up every morning lived the Menace, the white-skinned breed of his one and only enemy, the puny thing that walked ever upright on its two hind legs. From away there where the moon rose at night came that ever merciless, ever remorseless foe that spat fire and thundered when it killed. And Big Ben sensed, too, the reason for that white-skinned thing's superiority. It wasn't greater strength or more subtly cunning wits that was responsible for the ever westward, ever restless migration of the lynx and the cougar and the cunning carcajou, and the ever thinning ranks of the silver-tips; but that long, shiny stick that that human foe carried. That shining black rifle that leaped across the river and the clearing and the canyon, and bit little red agony holes through the hair and the muscles and the bones!

Big Ben stopped. The law of self-preservation screamed at him to stop! Before him, where the pass dipped down into the canyon, was a break in the cover, a wide gap lacking even a bush to hide the grizzled buff of his conspicuous bulk. And that white-skinned human enemy—that one, silent footed, keen eyed, cunning foe that he had been pitting his wits against for so long—he had crossed its scent in the night!

Big Ben raised his head till the top of his nose levelled with the extreme tip of the sheltering rock, and glanced across the canyon. Over there the canyon wall shot straight up, unscalable. But—there were many ledges across the face of that wall, ledges easily negotiable for cool heads and clinging, silent feet. And there were many

angles and bushes and fallen boulders on those ledges to hide his human foe!

Then suddenly Big Ben's keen little eyes, the pupils contracting to focus distance, swept down the canyon. His eight hundred pounds of massive muscles quivered instantly to motionless rigidity. For a full minute he stared. Then whirling sharply behind the sheltering rocks he padded swiftly back through the pass.

Down in the canyon was one of Big Ben's red-skinned foes.

Down in the canyon Crooked Face, the breed Indian, slipped silently along on the toes of his mocassined feet. He was "coming back." Down at the end of the canyon in the river valley was "Jeem Hendree's cabin." Barely three miles away lived "Jeem Hendree an' hees squaw!" Crooked Face felt of his twisted jaw, his right hand rising to the ten inch knife in his belt.

And above him on the ledge of the canyon wall Jim Hendry saw him.

Jim Hendry's rifle sagged from his shoulder, when Big Ben turned back up the pass, and his finger curled back from the trigger. Jim's knowledge of wild-life was extensive. He knew that Big Ben had not seen him. At that distance his dark clothing would blend undiscernibly with the general color scheme of the rock formation behind him. Yet he knew that it had been an enemy that Big Ben had seen—his one and only enemy, Man. And if it was a man! Jim laid his old muzzle-loader noiselessly down on the ledge and raised his eyes above the boulder. The next second Jim Hendry was working his way back silently along the ledge. And as he crawled he prayed:

"God, that I'll be in time!"

Jim Hendry was responsible for the twisted jaw that gave Crooked Face his name. Once Jim had caught the Indian robbing one of his traps. A knife had gleamed, and Jim had met it with a smashing fist. And lacking proper medical attention the jaw bone had healed awry. Then when the teepee village moved west, Crooked Face had boasted that he would come back—some day.

This was the day.

Big Ben reached the other end of the divide-pass a half hour later. He stopped there, his shifty little eyes searching the river valley below him. On the left, on the river bank, was the cabin where his white enemy lived. On the right, breaking out into the valley, was the canyon containing his red-skinned foe. Half way between, romping with a strange little animal among the juniper circles on the flat, was the white enemy's cub.

For just a moment Big Ben hesitated. He wanted to get away from the cabin and into the canyon, but— With a snarl Big Ben turned his head and glanced back along the pass trail behind him. He was cornered!

On the left was the white enemy's cabin! On the flats was the white enemy's cub! Among the rocks at the mouth of the canyon he caught a glimpse of his red-skinned foe! Behind him on the pass trail, running, came his white enemy with the rifle! Big Ben was cornered!

With his little eyes red veined with the unreasoning rage of desperation, Big Ben whirled to the right. Of his three human foes, he faced the one without the rifle on the right.

Jim Hendry raced out into the mouth of the pass and came to an abrupt stop. His breath was spent. For nearly four miles through the pass he had kept to the top of his speed in an effort to overcome the advantage the shorter canyon route gave Crooked Face. And he had succeeded. The Indian was just leaving the mouth of the canyon.

Jim's eyes left the Indian and swept down to the cabin, measuring their relative distances therefrom. He didn't want to kill Crooked Face unless he must. He could reach the cabin minutes ahead of the Indian, and Crooked Face carried no rifle. Then, too, if he killed the Indian he would have to paddle sixty miles down the river to report his death to—

Jim's sagging shoulders heaved erect! The high color of over-exertion in his face faded to a sickly white! For the space of one sharp gasp he stared! Then the old muzzle-loader leaped to his shoulder, quivered a moment, and set rigidly! Down

on the flat, four year old Willie Boy dodged out of a circle of juniper and raced after the pup!

And Crooked Face had drawn his knife!

But Jim Hendry never pulled the trigger. Unknowing, Crooked Face cut through the alders—square across Big Ben's path!

The Indian whirled on the balls of his toes! His right hand swept back, and leaped straight up! The ten inch blade of the knife disappeared to the grip in Big Ben's throat! Then Crooked Face tried to dodge the sweep of those four three inch curved-sabre claws!

He failed.

Ten minutes later Jim Hendry dropped Willie Boy on his crib. And his face was set hard and his voice was tainted with irony that he couldn't control when he faced his wife.

"I found him a long ways away," he rasped slowly. "But it was Crooked Face that died."

THE instinct that sends a mortally wounded fox or rabbit or partridge into a bush to die drove Big Ben toward a big fissure in the floor of the canyon. His white human enemy was behind him, but—somehow it didn't matter now. For the first time in his life that relentless law of self-preservation had ceased its eternal screaming. Ahead, just ahead, was a deep, dark hole in the rock, and—peace. But Big Ben failed to make the fissure. When the frost of death bit into his heart only his fore paws lapped over the edge.

Jim Hendry glanced back along the blood blazed trail and marvelled at the vitality that had carried Big Ben across nearly two miles of broken rock. Then he drew his knife and knelt down besides one of Big Ben's mighty paws. That long coveted pelt would take the place of many blankets on Willie Boy's crib when the frost—

The needle point of Jim Hendry's skinning knife paused above Big Ben's blood-stained paw. Jim got up on his feet. He walked a few paces down the canyon, toward the valley where his cabin stood. He sheathed his knife.

Five minutes later Jim ran his fingers through the long silver-tipped hairs of Big Ben's coat.

"No, old fellow," he whispered softly. "I wanted your coat to keep the frost out of Willie Boy's crib, but—you've done that already, Big Ben. If you hadn't died I might never have needed your coat. You—you kept the frost of death out of Willie Boy's crib. Keep your coat, Big Ben."

And two hours later Jim Hendry glanced back at the monument of stones above the fissure in the rock and smiled. He had lost a pelt, a fine big pelt; but he had kept out the frost of ingratitude.

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## The Black Cat Club

(*Continued from page 2*)

being told that we are breathless) until he drops exhausted at his little master's door.

*Patricia in Particular* is a wholesome enough story of its kind, but its kind has been done too often. The woman who intervenes in a commercial deal to help out a man has to be of more than ordinary interest to measure up to the standard of the "Roast Beef Medium" type. There are other minor objections.. The story errs in that it presupposes the gullibility of a clever, wide-awake business man. From an artistic point of view, Patricia's attempt to queer Guthrop is a little overdone, unless we are to believe that without her interference and in spite of Jerry Brent's superiority as a salesman Guthrop would have landed the order. The story holds the interest, even though the reader needs no Ouija board to foretell the dénouement.

*Sic Semper Tyrannis* is a tale that amuses and at the same time discloses various sidelights on the life aboard a man-o' war. The author is successful in making Devine stand out, through abundant word pictures and minor incidents, as the head devil of the ship, until his unconquerable animal spirits precipitate the final escapade with its humorous dénouement. The incident

of the illumination is not of sufficient dramatic quality to carry the story without this multiplicity of detail. One is impressed by the fact that the author knows the Navy from "A to e-t-c," and is relieved by such knowledge, for a story of this, or some other organization, often leaves the regrettable impression of blind fumbling over unknown territory.

*Eve's Daughters* is interesting, as any Auntie Miller story is bound to be, but cannot compete with the author's previous stories featuring the same character. Auntie Miller redeems the story from mediocrity or worse. She is a valuable discovery, a step-up transformer by means of which her creator can convert story material of low potentiality into highly interesting reading matter. Without her, the story could hardly survive, for its plot is of the very thinnest. The two most attractive characters, Auntie Miller and Henry, are the two of least importance in the development of the plot. The girl Fleta is true to her type, but not so the Professor. His individuality makes no impression upon us; he is in fact nothing more than a handsome peg upon which to hang the plot. It is not to be wondered at that the cold beauty of the chiseled-featured Nerissa did not affect him as did the sympathetic, red-blooded Fleta. Our parks and museums are full of chiseled beauties. We admire them—nothing more. So, we should not be too hard on the Professor. He was tempted, and there Henry puts the trimmings on the story by calling the attention of his faithful wife to the fact that he had broken two engagements for her. Such instances as the marriage of Fleta and the Professor admittedly do happen, but they are exceedingly rare, and especially so in the manner described by the author.

*The Psychological Moment* is a highly amusing boarding-house epic in which the characters are true to type and the action in harmony with the characters. Stiles and Hopper are of the class of young men who affect shell-rimmed glasses, skim the headlines of knowledge and then endeavor to discuss what appears in the body of the columns. Only two young men who so deeply admired the grace with which their lady protruded her minor digits in sipping tea, could have had such sublime faith in the psychological moment as to seek to create it. The spontaneous and at times almost irrelevant dialogue throughout the story makes and sustains the characters, and is in itself remarkable for its fidelity to the type portrayed. Luella's "all the king's money" and Midge's "Ab-solutely" are notable in this respect. We instinctively sympathize with the one who is the subservient character up to and including the "psychological moment" and are no less pleased at Midge's winning the lady fair than Midge himself. The made-to-order rescue is the funniest sketch that has been in the BLACK CAT for some time.

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The nineteenth contest comprises the stories in this issue, (June); and all lists must be received at the office of the BLACK CAT, Salem, Mass., before July 10th. Prizes will be awarded July 15th; and the result of the contest will be announced in the September BLACK CAT; issued August 15th.

A PRIZE of $25 will be awarded to the author of the story which is selected as the best story of the month by the largest number of club members.

A PRIZE of $10 will be awarded to the member sending in the best criticism.

PRIZES of $2.50 EACH will be awarded to members whose criticisms rank third and fourth in the contest.

PRIZES of $1 EACH will be awarded to five other members who criticisms are of sufficient merit to deserve reward.

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CUT OUT THIS COUPON AND ATTACH TO YOUR ANSWER

THE BLACK CAT CLUB Date.....

Salem, Mass.

I am } a member of the BLACK CAT CLUB.
Please enroll me as }

I have read the June BLACK CAT and enclose herewith a list of the stories arranged in the order that they appeal to me, with a criticism of each. I am also enclosing twenty-five cents, in return for which please send me one of the club buttons with a..... back.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

NOTE: If you do not care for a club button strike out the last sentence above. Members are not obliged to purchase buttons. If you desire one, specify in the blank space whether you wish the pin or screw back.

# How I Improved My Memory In One Evening

## The Amazing Experience of Victor Jones

"Of *course* I place you! Mr. Addison Sims of Seattle.

"If I remember correctly—and I *do* remember correctly—Mr. Burroughs, the lumberman, introduced me to you at the luncheon of the Seattle Rotary Club three years ago in May. This is a pleasure indeed! I haven't laid eyes on you since that day. How is the grain business? And how did that amalgamation work out?"

The assurance of this speaker—in the crowded corridor of the Hotel McAlpin—compelled me to turn and look at him, though I must say it is not my usual habit to "listen in" even in a hotel lobby.

"He is David M. Roth, the most famous memory expert in the United States," said my friend Kennedy, answering my question before I could get it out. "He will show you a lot more wonderful things than that, before the evening is over."

And he did.

As we went into the banquet room the toastmaster was introducing a long line of the guests to Mr. Roth. I got in line and when it came my turn, Mr. Roth asked, "What are your initials, Mr. Jones, and your business connection and telephone number?" Why he asked this, I learned later, when he picked out from the crowd the 60 men he had met two hours before and called each by name without a mistake. What is more, he named each man's business and telephone number, for good measure.

I won't tell you all the other amazing things this man did except to tell how he called back, without a minute's hesitation, long lists of numbers, bank clearings, prices, lot numbers, parcel post rates and anything else the guests gave him in rapid order.

* * * * * *

When I met Mr. Roth again—which you may be sure I did the first chance I got—he rather bowled me over by saying, in his quiet, modest way:

"There is nothing miraculous about my remembering anything I want to remember, whether it be names, faces, figures, facts or something I have read in a magazine.

"*You can do this just as easily as I do.* Anyone with an average mind can learn quickly to do exactly the same things which seem so miraculous when I do them.

"My own memory," continued Mr. Roth, "was originally very faulty. Yes it was—a really *poor* memory. On meeting a man I would lose his name in thirty seconds, while now there are probably 10,000 men and women in the United States, many of whom I have met but once, whose names I can call instantly on meeting them."

"That is all right for you, Mr. Roth," I interrupted, "you have given years to it. But how about me?"

"Mr. Jones," he replied, "I can teach you the secret of a good memory in one evening. This is not a guess, because I have done it with thousands of pupils. In the first of seven simple lessons which I have prepared for home study, I show you the basic principle of my whole system and you will find it—not hard work as you might fear—but just like playing a fascinating game. I will prove it to you."

He didn't have to prove it. His Course did; I got it the very next day from his publishers, the Independent Corporation.

When I tackled the first lesson, I suppose I was the most surprised man in forty-eight states to find that I had learned—in about one hour—how to remember a list of one hundred words so that I could call them off forward and back without a single mistake.

That first lesson *stuck*. And so did the other six.

Read this letter from C. Louis Allen, who at 32 years is president of a million dollar corporation, the Pyrene Manufacturing Company of New York, makers of the famous fire extinguisher:

"Now that the Roth Memory Course is finished, I want to tell you how much I have *enjoyed* the study of this most fascinating subject. Usually these courses involve a great deal of drudgery, but this has been nothing but pure *pleasure* all the way through. I have derived much benefit from taking the course of instructions, and feel that I shall continue to strengthen my memory. That is the best part of it. I shall be glad of an opportunity to recommend your work to my friends."

Mr. Allen didn't put it a bit too strong.

The Roth Course is priceless! I can absolutely *count* on my memory now. I can call the name of most any man I have met before—and I am getting better all the time. I can remember any figures I wish to remember. Telephone numbers come to mind instantly, once I have filed them by Mr. Roth's easy method. Street addresses are just as easy.

The old fear of forgetting (you know what that is) has vanished. I used to be "scared stiff" on my feet—because I wasn't *sure*. I couldn't remember what I wanted to say.

Now I am sure of myself, and confident, and "easy as an old shoe" when I get on my feet at the club, or at a banquet, or in a business meeting, or in any social gathering.

Perhaps the most enjoyable part of it all is that I have become a good conversationalist—and I used to be as silent as a sphinx when I got into a crowd of people who knew things.

Now I can call up like a flash of lightning most any fact I want right at the instant I need it most. I used to think a "hair trigger" memory belonged only to the prodigy and genius. Now I see that every man of us has that kind of a memory if he only knows how to make it work right.

I tell you it is a wonderful thing, after groping around in the dark for so many years, to be able to switch the big searchlight on your mind and *see* instantly everything you want to remember.

This Roth Course will do wonders in your office.

Since we took it up you never hear anyone in *our* office say "I guess" or "I think it was about so much" or "I forget that right now" or "I can't remember" or "I must look up his name." Now they are right there with the answer—like a shot.

Have you ever heard of "Multigraph" Smith? Real name H. Q. Smith, Division Manager of the Multigraph Sales Company, Ltd., in Montreal. Here is just a bit from a letter of his that I saw last week:

"Here is the whole thing in a nutshell: Mr. Roth has a most remarkable Memory Course. It is simple, and easy as falling off a log. Yet with one hour a day of practice anyone—I don't care who he is—can improve his Memory 100% in a week and 1000% in six months."

My advice to you is don't wait another minute. Send to Independent Corporation for Mr. Roth's amazing course and see what a wonderful memory you have got. Your dividends in *increased earning power* will be enormous.

VICTOR JONES

### Send No Money

So confident is the Independent Corporation, the publishers of the Roth Memory Course, that once you have an opportunity to see in your own home how easy it is to double, yes, triple your memory power in a few short hours, that they are willing to send the course on free examination.

Don't send any money. Merely mail the coupon or write a letter and the complete course will be sent, all charges prepaid, at once. If you are not entirely satisfied send it back any time within five days after you receive it and you will owe nothing.

On the other hand, if you are as pleased as are the thousands of other men and women who have used the course send only $5 in full payment. You take no risk and you have everything to gain, so mail the coupon now before this remarkable offer is withdrawn.

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Black Cat 518

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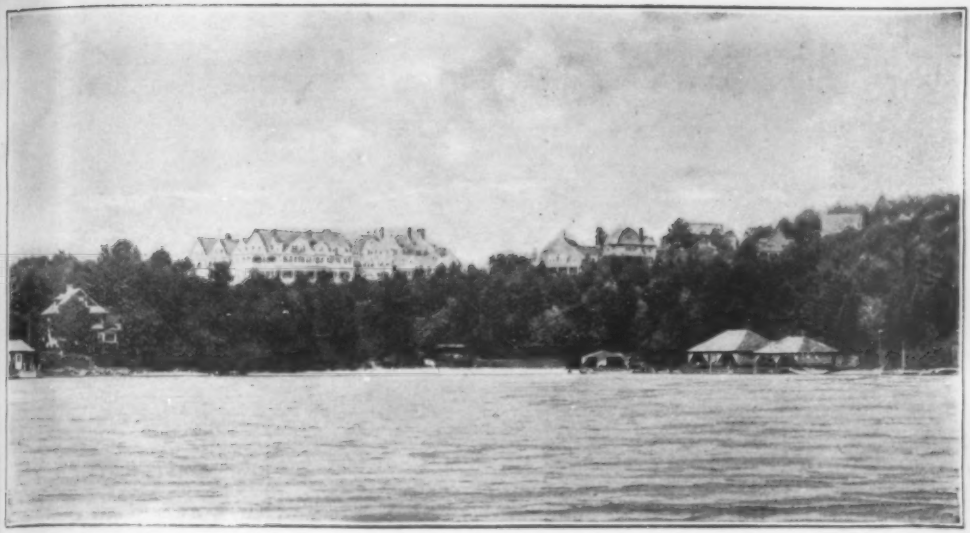

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